SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

April 1931

VOL. LXXXIX NUMBER 4

JACOB'S LADDER

By MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS

One of the real finds of the whole $5,000 Prize Novel competition. "Jacob's Ladder" is the poignant and simple story of two young Florida swamp-dwellers, done in a style which is warm and full of emotion. Mrs. Rawlings's "Cracker Chidlings" in the February SCRIBNER'S is her only other published work. This short novel confirms the promise shown in that work and brings upon the literary scene a new writer.

I

THE night was sultry for square dancing. The Florida summer hesitated sullenly between continued heat and the equinoctial need of change. The dancers in the Jacklin cabin sweat as they shuffled and wheeled. Tie-tongued Pinny called the figures in a high minor wail intelligible only to experienced dancers.

" 'hoo' a coo'!"

There were grumblings.

"Dogged if it ain't too hot to shoot the coon."

Alternating couples shot the neighboring girl through to her partner, languidly. The figure was usually danced violently, so that the lighter girls often sprawled on the rough pine floor, and it was all a man could do to brace himself to catch his partner if she were buxom.

The tune was plaintive, "Comin' 'Round the Mountain," and lent itself to the suffocated daze in which the dancers moved. Feet "sluf-sluf"-ed flatly. The bellow of a bullbat sounded outside the window, a hoarse bass to the squeak of the fiddle and the whine of the jew's-harp. Marsh frogs tinkled intermittently like the jangle of Chinese music.

"Bir' i' a ca'!"

Bird-in-the-cage was always popular. Dull eyes brightened. The tempo of the dance quickened. The middle-aged men held themselves rigidly, shoulders back, chests expanded, moving only their feet and their long arms. The young bloods danced with their heads lowered, reaching belligerently far ahead of their slight bodies, their heels flicking up behind them. In the night's wet heat they sent forth the odor of their own pointer dogs, overlaid with the acridity of plug tobacco, the musk of mules and of the soil, with here and there the sharp sweetness of corn liquor.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Old Jo Leddy was the only man drunk. He claimed that "he couldn't no more go thu a set then a barbecue 'possum, lessen he was good and likkered." His partner to-night was his newest gal, the widow Boone. With the adjacent couple that formed his square, he made a cage about her. She shuffled rhythmically as the other three whirled around her. The cage broke to let her out. Old Jo moved in to take her place. The circling three chanted briskly.

"Bird out—buzzard in!
Purty good bird fer the shape he's in!"

They tittered. The figure was amusing when the "buzzard" was drunk.

"Ha-hey!"

The dancers sashayed. The individual couples concentrated on each other, shoulders pressed together like wrestlers. The whole dance was violent, earnest, without levity.

"Sluf-sluf! Shuffle-shuffle! Sluf-sluf!"

The music stopped as abruptly as though the instrument had been struck from the fiddler's hands. The dancers fell away from one another wherever the end of the set found them. Some of the couples loitered out into the sulky moonlight, fanning their hot faces with handkerchiefs and slapping at the mosquitoes. The older women dropped down on the sides of the white iron bed in a far corner of the room, where old lady Jacklin sat sewing pieces for her interminable quilts.

The kerosene lamps flared up sootily as a quick gust of air sucked from window to door. The palmettos rustled their fans a moment above the cypress shingles of the roof. The fiddler tilted back in his splint-bottomed chair and dozed between sets. The men spat in the empty fireplace. Old Jo Leddy passed around a pint, then the night's closeness absorbed even his exuberance.

Suddenly the flickering voices of quarrelling females flashed like lightning in the thick atmosphere. Old Jo's former sweetheart was threatening the widow Boone.

"Celie's fixin' to crawl onto her," commented old lady Jacklin delightedly.

Jo jumped to the doorway, moistening his loose red lips. His eyes hardened. He snarled impartially at both angry women.

A thin girl in a ragged brown calico dress loosened herself from the confused group on the stoop and entered the one-room cabin for the first time. She flattened herself against the wall, as though, like a chameleon, she wished to fade from sight. She was conspicuous for the extreme poverty of her clothing and for her emaciation. Her body had the graceful ease of any thin wild animal. Her chipmunk-colored hair hung loosely about her neck. Her eyes were bright and quick. Above the pointed cheekbones and sharp chin and nose they gave her very much the look of a young squirrel. For all her gauntness, she was not unlovely.

Old Jo stopped to glare at her as he swaggered into the cabin again. He had pushed both Celie and the widow Boone off the steps in the perfect justice of his arbitration.

"Git on outen here, Florry!"

The girl was gone as quietly as she had come.

"Jo!"

Old lady Jacklin shrilled him to her across the twenty feet of cabin.

"Who's thet gal?"

"My gal young un. Hain't never carried her nowheres before. Done carried her with me to-night, did I git the notion to git too drunk to go home alone."

"Jo Leddy, you be the sorriest ole Cracker I know. Ain't she a pore leetle puny thing!"

"Jest thin-like. She's strong."

"Unh-unh! Reckon it's true, then, I

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heern tell you works her loggin' in the cypress swamps, like a man. Up to her shoulders in swamp water, times."

"Shore I works her. Why not? Women-folks is good fer love or fer work, one. My ole woman makes a die of it and don't leave me nothin' but a gal young un. No boys. You bets I've done worked her. Loggin' ain't hurt her none."

The next set was forming. Old lady Jacklin threw insults at his indifferent back.

"Steaden o' spendin' what sorry leetle you makes on liquor an' women, you'd orter buy thet gal some store clothes and carry her to the dances decent-like."

"She wouldn't go noways," he laughed. "She don't favor me none. She's rabbity!"

The dancers were in position. The fiddler struck up the favorite tune, brought to the Florida interior long since by Georgia and Carolina ancestors, "Ten-Cent Cotton."

Old Jo cut a buck-and-wing as he swung toward his partner. He thundered out the opening phrase.

"Ten-cent cotton an' fifty-cent meat!
How in the Hell kin a pore man eat!"

The dancers roared with laughter.

"Old Jo's a sight. He shore kin cut the fool."

The girl Florry looked up from her solitude on the steps at a shadow in the doorway. A young Cracker in torn blue pin-checks, as ragged almost, almost as gaunt, as she, came hesitantly out of the light and music of the room.

"I'll set down by you, if you don't keer," he said. "I don't aim to worry you none. I—I be rabbity, too."

They smiled together a moment.

She was both alarmed and attracted, like all young woods things in their first intimate contact with man. Until this terrifying night, when old Jo had ordered her to follow him the six miles to the dance, she had seen perhaps a dozen white men. None had spoken to her except the sleepy old fellow who drove a team of buff oxen in to their clearing to load their logs; the manager of the lumber mill, splendid, scarcely to be called human, in dark store clothes and driving an automobile; and a fat range rider.

Florry and the youth sat without speech. Their thoughts moved brightly toward each other, like fireflies in the darkness. She decided, as she usually did when anything startled her, that she was not afraid. Fearlessness was her defense against the world. She was conscious neither of happiness nor of unhappiness. She accepted. When any new aspect of the disagreeable presented itself, she asked herself only whether or not it was best to run from it. Against the background of old Jo and the cypress swamp, very few things seemed formidable.

Assuredly, compared with the other things she knew, this lean, tattered young Cracker was nothing to fear. She grew accustomed to the sweaty smell of him beside her, the rise and fall of his breathing, the comfort of his silence. She placed him, the first human being to enter there, in the corner of her mind that contained things definitely pleasing. These were: grits when she was very hungry; wild game, always; Sport, the hound; all flowers; trees in bloom, particularly the sweet bay and the magnolia; facts new to her, that she could be sure she understood; the taste of running branch water, for their well was sulphurous; a lighter'd fire on a cold night; nigger babies—she had never seen a white one; and a certain sort of day, cool and blue and wind-swept; a day in fall, when the summer's heat was done, and the red-bugs and mosquitoes gone.

Such days must be due now. Wet heat like this meant storm. The moon, white

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as the belly of a dead fish, had a great ring around it. It was a wet moon, a moon of impending change. Out of the night's heat puffed another quick gust of air, fresh and chill. The palms rustled wildly, the tops of the pines lashed a moment, a ribbon of black cloud trailed across the moon. Then the night was still again. A hoot owl sobbed throatily. A whip-poor-will, late or persistent with his courting, sounded his nocturnal mating call uncertainly.

Florry spoke.

"Hit's September a'ready?"

"Yessum!"

The youth's voice was eager. Speech was as difficult for him as for her, but he longed to attempt it.

"'Bout the fust week. Shore will be good to git the skeeters blowed out. I mean, they's a pain, nights, and days too, places over in the hammock."

"Hit's time fer the high winds?"

"Yessum. Shore is. Wouldn't surprise me none to see 'em beginnin' tomorrer."

"Wouldn't surprise me none," she agreed.

"Yessum. 'Bout crack o' day, mought git up and hear the palmeeters shakin' theirselves to pieces, and the ole pine trees a-crashin', and the rain fair fallin' sidewise, if the high winds has done come."

"Well, I reckon it's time."

"Yessum. Hit's time."

They were silent again. Suddenly the girl knew that this man was not a stranger. He was like herself. More, he was a part of herself. She was a part of him. It was altogether natural that they should be sitting together in the hot, swarming night, while other folk thumped their feet and tossed their heads to fiddle music.

The last set was called and ended. The young Cracker moved cautiously away from the girl, inside the cabin. The fiddler was ready for a snort of old Jo's 'shine, now his night's work was done. Old Jo was reeling. The widow Boone left him and went home with a man who had a mule and wagon.

Florry helped her father down the steps, her mind full of other things. His condition was of no importance. He beat her, drunk, and worked her, sober. The beating was more painful than the logging, but it was sooner over. She accepted old Jo, his 'shine, his women, as part of the general pattern of life. They came and went across her like the heat and the mosquitoes, like the waters of the swamp. She had no more control over them than over the impending hurricane.

They had walked the six miles from their clearing to the Jacklin's in an hour and a half, old Jo leading the way smartly through the familiar piney-woods. Dawn was breaking before they were home again. Florry had to go ahead through territory unknown to her for the first four miles. She picked an instinctive trail, often quitting the dirt wagon road altogether for a northeasterly short-cut through the open flatwoods. Jo stumbled behind her, the effort absorbing all his breath, so that he had none left with which to curse. When he dropped too far behind, she waited without looking back, her eyes strained ahead in the umbrous twilight that was the moon's setting.

When they plunged into the hammock south of the clearing, Florry could move more surely. The gusts of air that had been puffing at them on their way had blended into a long sweep of wind, rising and falling like the surge of surf. As the moon set behind them and the east lightened, the sky showed itself a bedlam of scudding clouds, rushing pell-mell south by west. Birds were stirring sleepily in the clearing. A red-bird trilled richly from a sweet gum. A pair of turtle doves whirred from the long-leaf-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ed pine where they had nested for the night. In the cypress swamp to the north, jorees began to crackle. A covey of young quail emerged in single file from the night's shelter of thick brambles back of the cabin. The hound pat-patted his tail on the sand to greet them, but did not lift his sleepy head from his paws.

Old Jo tumbled into the rough pine bed at the side of the main room and snored thickly at once. Florry did not light the lamp in the gray dawn, but walked through the open, covered breezeway to the kitchen at the rear. This was the hour at which they arose when they were getting out logs and she was hungry. Jo was probably at the beginning of a long drunk. At any rate, he would not log to-day nor to-morrow.

There were a few embers of live oak in the small wood stove, but she did not trouble to stir them to life. She poured a cup of thick cold coffee and chicory in a tin cup and drank it, munching a slab of cold gray cornbread, a slice of cold boiled bacon and a few left-over greens. A very little satisfied her, for she was accustomed to working hard on light rations, but somehow she wanted more. She split a leathery biscuit and soaked it with home-made cane syrup. It was last year's boiling and was souring a little. Old Jo would give her the devil if he could see her pouring out so much syrup.

Near the stove was a pallet on the floor, covered with crocus sacks stuffed with black moss. Florry took off her stiff boy's shoes and black cotton stockings, the ragged brown dress, and her drawers made of sugar sacking. She lay down in her short shift of the same material and drew a quilt over her head to keep out the mosquitoes. She was not sleepy. She knew that things awaited her for which she must be prepared with sleep. The pines were hissing. The water-oak scratched long boughs across the cypress shingles of the kitchen roof. High winds were coming. They would sweep across her, move her on. When they were gone, she would not be in this place.

The girl was awakened by the tumult. It was broad day, and the outer perimeter of the hurricane was moving across the section. The yellow-grayness of the sky was tinged with green in the west. The roar of the wind was a train thundering nearer and nearer. The palmettos thrashed their fans in frenzy. Rain was pounding on the roof as though it would beat it open. On the gutters it flailed like bird-shot. The thunder no more than boomed above the down-pour. Beyond the kitchen window, the gray flood was a curtain across the piney-woods. The world outside the cabin was obliterated.

Shingles ripped off with a dry rattle. The winds seemed to be the worst she could remember. This was the first time they had taken the shingles. Good, heavy, hand-hewn cypress, they weren't ready by twenty years to give way. The sugar cane would be flat. They'd have to grind right away to save it, fully ripe or no. Old Jo would have to grind——

Sport darted into the kitchen, his spotted coat blown into bristles. He whimpered. He was always afraid in a storm. She set the plate of cornbread on the floor and he gulped it, his ribs heaving in and out. He came back to her, quivering. She listened for sounds from old Jo. She could hear nothing in the tumult, in any case. He could be screaming for his rations and she didn't believe she could hear him. She opened the kitchen door to get fresh water and the wind lifted it from its make-shift leather hinges as if it were a leaf in her hands. She was all but taken with it as it hopped across the sand. The gale sucked her

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from the house. She pulled herself back into the confused open kitchen by great effort.

She washed her face and hands in the basin of water she had used last night. She put on her drawers and dress and made a lunge across the breezeway. She couldn't remember ever having to fight so hard across it before. The winds were bad last year, but not like this. Her lean body bent almost at right angles. The last few feet she was lying on the wind, like a swimmer in the water. Her strong bony arms pulled her along. She sprawled breathless into the main cabin. Old Jo still lay in the sagging bed, his red lips open, his breath rising and falling heavily, too deep in sleep to hear if the roof should fall about his head. Well, she thought, leave him lay.

"I better be fixin' to clean up whilst he's quiet-like."

She was filled with the need of putting the place in order. She brushed the rough pine floor with a broom-grass sweep. The dirt was largely loose sand which she brushed into the fireplace. She picked up old Jo's wide-brimmed black felt Sunday hat from the floor and hung it on a wooden peg on the back of the door. A bunch of yellow daisies from the flat-woods was dead in a coffee can on the bare deal table. She threw them in the fireplace and poured the fetid water on the tin cans of plants on the two window-sills. They were wild ferns and jasmine vines. The rain was beating down too fiercely to set them out in it. Her porch plants in lard pails were being whipped to pieces. Two of them had been knocked over and rolled toward the wall of the cabin, where they thumped and banged. She moved Jo's twelve-gauge shotgun to a corner by the clay fireplace. There was nothing more in the room to put in order. There was indeed nothing more there.

Florry made a rush back to the kitchen. The gale lifted her across the breezeway as though great hands lay under her armpits. Moved by an obscure instinct, she overhauled her wardrobe. She patched the brown calico dress and took a few stitches in her other shift and drawers. The cockroaches had been at her ancient coat. She shook it out and brushed off the summer's white mould.

The young Cracker arrived in the lull of the gale. Like a bird-dog guided by scent, he came direct to the gaping rear door, where he stood hesitant. The rain washed through him from shirt to shoes. He pushed the dripping brown hair back from his eyes.

"I mean, hit's a toad-strangler of a rain," he proffered.

"I mean!" she agreed.

"Reckon your daddy'll keer, me a-follerin' this-a-way?"

"Reckon he mought." She looked him fearlessly in the face. "Hit don't worry me none. You couldn't get you no wetter," she said, "iffen you'll go yonder to the wood-pile and fetch me some lighter'd and a handful o' them turpentine chips, I kin make you a fire to dry you out a leetle."

"I shore will do thet thing."

He dragged back the door and propped it against the opening. The wet wood steamed and popped in the iron stove. Sport stretched luxuriously closer, groaned in his sleep. The smell of the man, the smell of his garments, filled the room in rich waves. Florry sat by him on the pallet.

"Them ole winds didn't waste no time a-comin'," he said.

"Seems like us mought o' brought 'em in, like, a-talkin' of 'em."

He shook his head.

"They was ready to come. I seed the signs."

She nodded.

"I kin feel them things a-comin', a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

long ways. I could kind o' feel you comin'," she added gravely.

"I studied some you mought be proud to see me."

They listened to the irregular surge of the rain on the shingles. The wind seemed to be picking up again. The chinaberry crackled ominously in its old brittle limbs. The boughs flailed the roof. The storm enclosed them, boxed them in together. It was inconceivable that they had ever been afraid, that they had ever been separate.

"My name be Martin," he said. "I be called mostly Mart."

"Mart," she repeated.

"You want to go off with me?" he asked.

She was not startled. She had sensed its coming, as she had sensed the coming of the gale. It was strangely a part of the storm. It was part of the inevitable change.

"I reckon."

"Git your things. Le's go."

She made a bundle of her belongings.

"What about your daddy?"

"I reckon we'd best jes' ease out. He mought raise up a turrible fuss iffen he knowed I was goin'."

"Kin you write out a letter to leave fer him?" he asked.

"No. I cain't write ary word."

"Nor me," he said.

"I got my name writ out," she suggested eagerly. "Thet Yankee at the sawmill done printed it fer me on a white paper."

"I got no use fer a Yankee," he said dubiously. "Reckon it's writ wrong, or means so'thin' else?"

"I don't think. The range rider kin read, and he said it done spelled 'Florry.' Iffen I leaves it where Pappy kin find it, he'll know it means I done went."

She withdrew the slip from her bundle and smoothed it out on the kitchen table, weighting a corner with the coffee-pot. Mart nodded approvingly. On the step he hesitated.

"Hit don't seem right, takin' you off in sech a wind and rain."

"Hit'll mebbe fair off to-morrer. Hit don't mean nothin' to me, gittin' wetted. Us got to git in the clare whilst Pappy's likkered."

"Thet's right. Us got to git in the clare."

As he turned to replace the door behind them she darted back and set a pan of rain water on the floor for the hound.

"A thirsty animal be so pitee-full," she explained.

The second circle of the hurricane was on them as they fought their way through the piney-woods, riotous with the hissing of pine boughs. The northwest section of the State was only getting the fringe of the great upheaval.

"On the east coast," Mart cried in her ear, "they tell the palmeeters gits flatted smack to the ground, times, like, and over in the scrub they sa-ays the trees 'll done be bended."

They stopped for breath under the comparative shelter of an over-hanging live oak.

"There wa'n't much there," Florry told him, "but I be ashamed, I plumb forgot to git you some rations."

"Don't let it worry you none," he assured her. "I don't eat regular. You got you a long whiles to git me rations in."

His lean brown face was bright with his smile. He grew serious.

"I figgered on gittin' over to Levy County and gittin' us a parson there, mebbe to-night."

She grew anxious.

"Don't it cost money to git married?"

"I reckon."

The subject was delicate.

"Mart, I ain't got me a dime. Have you got ary cash-money?"

Turning his back to the driving rain he emptied his pockets. There were two

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

paper dollars and some loose silver that proved too complicated to count accurately. It did not seem to total another dollar.

"Mart, I ain't too pertickler about standin' up in front of a parson. Hit's sort of a church-business, like, and I don't know nothin' abouten sech things. We could fix to git married some time when you got plenty cash-money."

"I 'druther you'd feel right about it, Florry. Hit shore don't make no difference to me. When we was sittin' together last night with the air so hot and restless-like, I studied then on you and me goin' off. All two of us so kind o' rabbity, like your daddy said. I shore gits lonesome, times, like."

She nodded.

"I shore feels all right about it. I'll be your ole woman and you'll be my ole man, right on. I ain't no leetle mite skeered."

He put one hand on her bony shoulder and peered fiercely at her.

"Leave me tell you," he said, "I ain't studyin' none on quittin' you, no ways, no how—no time——"

They made a new venture into the storm, working always south.

"Iffen we don't make Levy County," he called, "I knows a 'shiner'll put us up. He done borried my gun and I got to git it one time. Mought as well git it now. These high winds this time o' yare is like to last three, four days."

"And then them fine, blue days," she shrilled back. "Jest breezy-like and clare, and no red-bugs or skeeters."

"Thet's right."

They fought on.

"I shore feels mean about leavin' ole Sport," she said. "Pappy'll starve him to death."

"Ain't he a good rabbit dog? Cain't he ketch hisself rabbits?"

"I reckon." She pondered. "I reckon ole Sport kin make out on rabbits."

II

Florry said, "A marsh sho' am the crawlin'est thing."

She was a little homesick for the high piney-woods. The marsh seemed low, as though she were living in a sink-hole. The air was oppressive. The October night when Mart had brought her to the cabin in the lake-side hammock had startled her by its manner of falling. She had been looking idly at the streamers of salmon and gold in the sky above the close-set live oaks and sweet gums. Mart was repairing the sagging square shutters, so that they might be swung to, like casements, and hooked from the inside. The night air must be kept out, for it bred fever.

Suddenly, it was twilight, and in a moment, dark.

A brief panic touched her. The day was gone, and she was unable to see its going. All her life she had watched the sun burn fire-red through the long-leafed pines; drop inch by inch to a discernible oblivion. The close vegetation of the hammock turned the good sun unfriendly, a little treacherous.

She felt, at first, insecure in her footing. The piney-woods had been firm and dry. Following Mart along the marsh, in and out of the swamp, bare-footed, the soft muck gave alarmingly under her. Here and there Mart pointed out a bubbling seepage and warned her of quicksands. She remembered the cypress swamp, where she had moved carelessly in brown water shoulder-deep. To her memory it had been surer, but she decided that a stranger might have been uneasy there. The cypress waters, amber-brown like a fine clear coffee, had been open. There was no undergrowth. The marsh edge, the very waters of the lake, until they were a half-mile out, were a thick, slippery mass of lilies, marsh-grass and coon-tail. Frogs splashed everywhere. Small fish darted in and out,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brushing cool against her bare legs. Water moccasins slid like oil into the water.

In a brief time she grew intimate with the marsh Mart called a prairie. The marsh gave them their living, for in the cool autumn crispness Mart began to trap along its borders. The lake in front, the jungle hammock behind, enclosed them in what came to be a delightful safety. Rations were still scanty at times. Hunger was not new to her belly, but it was on the whole rather unimportant. A deep peace filled her. Sights and sounds and odors moved her as they had not done before. They were all associated with the pleasure of knowing that Mart was there; never more than a mile or two away.

Mart came in with a soft-shell cooter. The turtle was new to her. It had come out of the marsh to lay its eggs.

"Mart, a thing with a ugly ole haid like thet un, shore ain't fitten to eat."

"I mean, shore is!" he insisted. "Hit's a sight sweeter meat then chicken."

"Hain't it a fishy ole thing?"

"Nary a mite. Go on, Florry, cook it. We ain't had no meat in so long."

He drew out the long leathery neck with a hooked wire and cut off the sharp-beaked head with his knife. He separated the neck and four thick legs deftly from the shell, trimmed off sections of the translucent border, flexible like thin gristle. The female was full of yellow fat and still yellower eggs, some of them encased in paper-white shells, ready for depositing in a hole in the sand.

"Coons and skunks is wild fer cooter eggs," Mart told her. "You kin allus tell when it's fixin' to come a rain, for a cooter's got sense enough to lay jest afore-hand, so's the rain'll wash out her tracks and fool the varmints."

"Be cooter eggs fitten fer folks to eat?" she inquired distastefully.

"I mean! And here's a question my daddy allus asked and nobody couldn't never answer. Why do a soft-shell cooter lay a hard-shelled egg, and a hard-shell cooter lay a soft-shelled egg?"

She marvelled duly at the conundrum without an answer.

Mart cut out the heart and the plump liver. The heart continued to beat in its regular rhythm. Florry's eyes widened and Mart laughed silently at her astonishment.

"Jest you wait 'twel you sees what happens in the pan," he chuckled.

In the face of her ignorance, he did the cooking. He boned the pieces of pink and white meat, dipped them in meal and salt, and fried them in the black iron Dutch oven that was their only cooking utensil. The lid vibrated alarmingly and in a few moments he lifted it to show her the heart still beating in the bubbling grease and the muscles of the legs twitching spasmodically.

"Mart," she protested, "dogged iffen I wants to eat anything you has to stand on the lid to keep it from poppin' out o' the pan."

But when the meat was fried golden brown and tender, she agreed, after a first cautious nibbling, that it was plumb noble rations. The left-over pieces, with the shell-less eggs, Mart made into a stew the next day, with a little wild garlic for seasoning. The shell-eggs he boiled in salted water.

"They ain't done thu," Florry declared.

Again he could laugh at her, for the white of a turtle egg will not solidify, not though it be boiled a week and a day. The eggs were slightly musty in flavor, but fine eating. After that, Florry too kept watch for cooters, come on shore to lay. She delighted to poke one with a stick and watch the flat brown pancake body lunge viciously forward and the evil, snake-like head snap futilely. She had to be fast on her feet to run one down before it could reach water

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ahead of her; quick to flip it on its back.

The cabin, with trapping rights, Mart rented for a percentage of his hides. They went hungry often through December while he acquired a few skins and reinvested them in more traps. A dozen traps were needed to show a profit. Game was plentiful. Cool weather had set in early and the pelts were thick and glossy. In the hammock were 'coons and 'possums, skunks, red foxes and gray, and an occasional wild-cat. In the marsh were mink and a few otters. The mink were of poor quality, but the rare otters were large and fine.

Mart showed Florry an otter slide on a slight clay elevation. She wanted to come and watch the play the next moonlit night. Mart said she was foolish and set his largest trap at the top of the slide. A big trap with inch-long teeth was necessary to hold an otter in the full of his strength.

"Hit don't seem right," Florry said, "a-settin' trapses where a critter plays."

But he trapped one very seldom, and when he received thirty dollars for a fine pelt, in January, she forgot her scruples. That was a powerful piece of cash money for a varmint hide.

They ate 'coon meat only when there was no 'possum. It had a strong taste. Yet a 'coon was clean and a 'possum was a scavenger. But when a 'possum was fat with persimmons and pilfered pinders, his flesh was more succulent than the juiciest young pork. Sometimes Florry cut one in pieces and smothered it in the Dutch oven. Mart's favorite way was to turn it on a spit over a bed of live-oak coals.

Florry's only quarrel with Mart was over his taking of the skunks. He insisted on bringing them home to skin, as he did the other varmints. Florry swore she was half ill from the stench. Mart seemed indifferent to the odor. In the early spring he found a young skunk caught only by a toe. It enlisted his interest by showing no fear. He brought it home alive. Old nigger Will showed him how to remove the musk. It was a clean and pleasing pet. Florry was beginning to feel a warm surge of pleasure in its white-striped little black form, when a wild-cat made off with it one night, defenseless without its primordial weapon.

She went every morning with Mart to visit the traps. He did the skinning alone, but she helped him tack the hides to cure on the wall of the cabin, or stretch them over shingles. They must be stretched good and tight. All through the winter the unpainted gray walls were covered with drying skins.

Mart had the owner of the cabin send his name to fur houses in New York, St. Louis and New Orleans. Catalogues and post-cards came to him in the mail. The fat prices offered were read off to him. He sent bundles of hides to the various houses, but the money-order sums he received back did not tally with what had been offered. He found he did better at the fur dealer's in Manitopy. He had to walk some miles, fording a shallow river, or rent or borrow old Will's gray mule for the trip. It paid to do it.

Florry walked with him one crisp bright day in February and bought herself some red-spotted percale for a dress. There were many people walking up and down the streets. Some of them stared at her. They looked at her split coarse shoes, her ragged dress and caught-back soft hair. She was panicked, distraught, like a squirrel caught in a room. She could scarcely make the storekeeper in the village dry-goods store understand what she wanted. She picked the material at random, took her change and bundle blindly and scrambled out into the open. Her one thought was to meet Mart quickly and get away again. He came out of the fur dealer's dusty

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little building to find her crouched against the wall like a frightened dog. He was very little more comfortable than she. He bought snuff and pipe tobacco and they walked home without speaking. She did not go with him again.

It was hard for Mart to keep within boundaries at his trapping. A warm spell in February, with the sun beating down on the chilled hammock ground until it began to steam, brought out an old male rattlesnake for a few days. He caught or frightened away most of the small game in the immediate territory. One week of a diamond-back meant a deserted area. Mart looked longingly at the adjacent cultivated field, a Yankee's forty acres. There had been watermelons and corn there through the summer, pinders and chufas through the fall. 'Coons roamed the plot, seeking expectantly the next fresh crop of vegetables.

"Hit won't do no harm jest to work the edge, like," he decided.

Gradually he put his traps further and further in, until one day the Yankee caught him at it and ordered him off.

"Them 'coons shore'll eat up yore next crop," Mart found courage to protest.

"That's my business. I'll do my trapping if I want any done."

"How about trappin' on shares, like?"

The landowner looked distastefully at the youth's brown, unshaven face, at his bare feet with the torn blue breeches turned up above them.

"No. Now get out and stay out."

Mart walked into the cabin with his clear brown eyes clouded with hate. He threw his traps on the bare pine floor.

"Hit don't hurt no man to talk polite," he grieved. "Not a man thet owns forty good turned acres, free and clare, it don't hurt him none."

He breathed heavily with the shock of the encounter.

"Florry," he burst out, "the dogged biggety bastard done sended me off liken I was a nigger!"

She sorrowed with him. He brooded long over it, bitterly.

Cold weather sent the rattler back to his hole and the game returned. Just before the season closed Mart filled his traps several times. Tempted, he trapped on for another ten days, but word came through nigger Will that the game warden was making the rounds. He hustled his hides to Manitopy. He oiled his traps and put them away in a lean-to back of the cabin.

They had enough money, buried in a glass fruit jar, to last them until trapping should open again the coming November. The fur dealer figured it out for Mart.

Spring was a delicious thing, invested with a new benevolence. It was unreal to have money under the porch. Unreal, to be able to idle all day. No work to do. Grits to cook once or twice a day, white bacon to crisp to otter-brown, fresh-caught fish to fry, late sour oranges to gather from the three wild trees in the hammock, so long hung as to be almost sweetened. No cypress logs, tearing at the muscles. No eddying brown water under the arm-pits. No old Jo.

The lake turned musical over-night. The frogs piped up and down the length of their small silver song. Hoot owls over the marsh boomed with the vibrancy of a bass viol. The cranes and loons cried dissonant, not quite inharmonious. On a night of full moon in April, Mart and Florry sat on the cabin steps. The palms were silver in the moonlight. The new growth of the oaks was white as candles. An odor grew in the stillness, sweeter than breath could endure. It seeped across the marsh like a fog of perfume. It filled the hammock. Yellow jasmine was in bloom.

When in the brightness a mocking-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bird began to sing, Florry put out her hand to Mart with a quick, awkward motion. In the richness of her content, it was vital to her to touch him. It was as though she needed to be sure that he was there. Deep-sunk in her was a wisdom warning her that beauty was impermanent—safety was not secure—The money under the steps would not be always there. Nothing good stayed forever.

The mosquitoes were bad that summer. They slept with the cabin doors closed, the square shutters swung tight. They sweltered on hot nights on the pine bedstead Mart had hewn by hand and laced back and forth with strips of hide. In July the rains stopped. Both night and day were suffocating.

Florry awoke once at dawn, scarcely able to breathe. In the dim gray light she could see the sweat glistening on Mart's face. She slipped outside for air. Swarms of mosquitoes settled on her like a cloud. When she came down with chills and fever a few weeks later she knew of course that it was because she had exposed herself to the night's vapors.

The ordinary chills, the ordinary fever, striking her like a knife every afternoon, were matters of no particular alarm. Mart went to Manitopy for a bottle of Black Draught. She took it and grew worse. When she came to be out of her head for hours at a time, fighting phantoms, and wasted down to even more skeleton-like a figure than when Mart had taken her away, he lost all caution. He went to Manitopy for the doctor and paid willingly the staggering fee of thirty dollars for the half-dozen trips and the medicine. The iron and quinine took hold and by mid-September Florry was strong again.

The trapping money, however, was gone. The careful allotment of three dollars a week for rations and snuff and tobacco had been useless.

III

The September gales were not so fierce as usual. Summer moved into autumn without harshness. After the first quick distress, Mart and Florry were not disturbed that the money jar was empty. Mart made an alliance with the lake fishermen. They would not be forced to move on. Florry began to plant flowers and ferns and cuttings in tomato cans.

The fishermen were willing to have Mart join them on the terms by which they sold their fish to the storekeeper in the nearest village. He understood that hook and line fishing was only a pretense. A man could not be sure of catching half a dozen fish a day. They trapped and seined. This was illegal. The danger depended on who was county sheriff and who was the local game warden. At present Cap'n Tack, the storekeeper, who peddled the fish to city markets, had the game warden taken care of. A change of wardens would mean trouble.

Cap'n Tack owned the two seines, a hundred and fifty yards in length. They were worth a couple of hundred dollars. He provided the material for traps, a fine-meshed wire which the fishermen made into barrel-like traps with a funnel in each end. The fish swam idly into one of the funnels and seemed content to make no great effort to escape. But if a trap were left unemptied on the lake bottom too long, the fish swam out again. Cap'n Tack allowed the fishermen five cents a pound. He sold the fish for twelve. This did not seem disproportionate to the men. They could not buy seines themselves. When an unfriendly warden pulled up their traps and destroyed them, Cap'n Tack bought new ones.

Mart was allowed fishing shares in a rowboat with the half-grown son of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fisherman Boyter. He took Florry with him, half expecting to be told to send her home. No one seemed to object. Most of the time she paddled the boat, leaving Mart and young Boyter free to pull up and empty the traps.

The lake never lost its charm for her. They reached it by way of Crab Creek, two miles of winding channel to the lake. The Creek was a dark, lovely dream leading to the bright open of another world. The hammock pressed close on either side. Sometimes the rowboat scraped against cypress knees. Sometimes the moss-hung boughs of a live oak brushed like hands across it.

The channel was always sweet of odor. In season the jasmine perfumed it, the waxy white magnolias and the smaller blossoms of the sweet bay. In the rare intervals when there was no bloom, the clean smell of pines filled the Creek, or the rank reptilian richness of the marsh. The Creek was always alive with birds. Blue and gray cranes took fright slowly. Often white egrets sat without moving as the boat slid by. In a great dead hickory lived a pair of bald-headed eagles, crying weirdly on moonlit nights. Ahead of the boat the coots took off like clumsy seaplanes, threshing the water with their feet long before the incompetent wings lifted the dark bodies into the air.

The channel passed between rows of tall cat-tails just before it reached open water. The lake came before Florry suddenly. Each time, into the open, she felt its unreality, as though she were transfixed in space. It was of the blue-ness of space. A mile out from shore it was so solitary— The roar of a bull 'gator was like thunder in the heart of solitude. The gray and green and red of the distant hammock merged to form the semblance of tall cliffs, like prehistoric walls. The palms topped them like shaggy heads, far away. The blue sky was illimitable. Except for the rain-like rush of the coots and the dip of the paddle, the lake was a blue pool of silence.

The boat moved here and there about the bonnet patches, in and out among the floating tussocks. It was often difficult to locate the traps. Mart marked the spot where a trap had been dropped into the water, by beating the lily pads with the oar, cutting the edges of the thick green leaves. But time and wind and worms had a trick, too, of eating off the edges. He often groped futilely with a pole with a nail in the end.

When a trap contained many pounds of live fish, it was heavy lifting. It loomed large over the side of the boat and Mart and the boy tugged and toiled to get it in and open the small wire door to empty out the contents. They trapped much stuff for which they had no use, mudfish, eels and jacks. Sometimes Mart took the jackfish in to nigger Will. The jackfish flesh was white and sweet, but only a nigger had the patience to pick out the endless fine bones.

Their main catch was big-mouthed bass, which they knew as trout, perch and bream. There was a brief closed season, but they managed to slip out now and then at night. Cap'n Tack could always sell the catch as coming from Lake George, where there were no restrictions.

Old man Boyter said, "A man cain't stop makin' hisself a livin' jest a-cause the law be meddlesome."

The seining must be done at night. Hauling in the heavy nets was too lengthy a process to risk by daylight. Trapping by day, the movements of strange boats could be watched.

In March Cap'n Tack got drunk and talked freely in the wrong house. The friendly game warden was deposed. Zeke Teeter, from the village, was named in his place. It was not dreamed of that he would attempt to interfere

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the local fishing faction. He took his authority seriously. He not only found and destroyed twenty traps his first week, but he began to lie in wait for the fishermen along the shore.

Mart's boat lay alongside that of old man Boyter. They were emptying their traps leisurely when the sudden *put-put* of an outboard motor exploded and Zeke bore down on them. Old Boyter dropped the incriminating traps overboard not so much with discretion as with astonishment. Zeke cut off his motor and faced them a little sheepishly.

"Iffen Mart yere didn't have his wife along, you Zeke you, I shore would git you told!" old Boyter sputtered. "Sneakin' up thet-a-way on fellers you was raised with!"

"I don't keer," Zeke insisted, "I'm inforcin' the law on this lake."

"Well, you go do yer inforcin' some-'eres else. You don't belong to be inforcin' it on me."

Zeke withdrew before the old Cracker's wrath, but war was declared. It was agreed that with Zeke acting up it would be just as well to fish the traps by night and avoid trouble. When a camp-fire was observed of nights on Black Island, opinion was divided as to whether Willy Butler, recently escaped from the penitentiary at Raiford, was in hiding, or whether Zeke was fool enough to be lying there. Strong spiritual necessity alone would put a man in that jungle nest of rattlesnakes.

Old Boyter said, "Hit must be Willy. Zeke knowed there was a nine-foot shed of a rattler seed there lately. A man wants to be on Black Island bad, to risk them things."

But the inhabitants of Black Island proved to be Zeke, set on ingratiating himself with the county authorities by bringing in the lake's offenders.

Trapping by night, Mart refused to let Florry go with him. During a hot spell in April, young Boyter came down one afternoon with an early attack of fever. Mart set out alone that night, paddling softly to the bonnet patch where he had half a dozen traps. There was a murky half-moon. A water turkey, disturbed, flew off with a clatter of wings. Frogs splashed into the water from the lily pads.

As he reached for a bonnet to act as anchor, a boat moved in on him from either side. Quick hands in the darkness turned his boat over. He flailed wildly in the deep water. The two boats moved silently away. He thrashed about, trying to reach his rowboat. Rifle shots flicked across his head. One grazed his knuckles as he put a hand on his boat. He let go and swam in the opposite direction with a strong dog-paddle that was the only stroke he knew. He caught the drift of voices.

"Serve him dogged right iffen he do git drownded."

It was the voice of old man Boyter, in ambush since early morning. Mart understood that alone, he had been mistaken for warden Zeke. He raised his voice in a Hulloo, declaring himself. After an astonished pause, the two boats came to him. Old Boyter told it in the village as a prodigious joke. It came in due time to Zeke's ears. He was frightened. If they had caught him, he would surely have drowned. He let them alone most of the summer, until his courage oozed back in him, like sap rising again in a tree.

Mart lied to Florry. Some private knowledge of him told her when he came in at dawn that things had gone wrong. She looked at his blood-caked hand.

"A plumb acceedent," he said, and washed it carelessly.

"Hit ain't neither," she said shrewdly. "Did Zeke git you?"

He shook his head.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She had a basic fear of treachery.

"Mart, Boyter and them ain't turned on you?"

"No. Now Florry, don't git worrit up over nothin'. They ain't nary thing the matter."

She could get no further satisfaction. In her isolation from the village life, five miles away, the tale did not reach her.

After a summer of brooding inactivity, Zeke took heart to go after the fishermen. He had a sullen nature, and long pondering through the hot dog days finally inflamed him. He appeared on the lake recklessly, day and night, with an obtrusive shotgun. He had been taunted here and derided there. Cohorts of the fishing faction laughed at him openly. His own friends advised him that it was a job for a man from another part of the county.

Cap'n Tack decided to end the matter once and for all. He drew out his several hundreds of dollars in postal savings and invested in a fast little motorboat for the use of the seiners. Old man Boyter planned the campaign. His headquarters were in the Pocket, a lake-cove deep-indented in the hammock on the north shore. No one could slip in unobserved. Cap'n Tack and old Boyter decided to concentrate. The fishermen gathered in all the traps and piled them high in the Pocket. They would not leave them in the lake for Zeke to pick off, like a chicken-hawk picking off biddies. All the men were assigned to a few boats, and intensive seining was done openly, in the daytime. They dared Zeke to trouble them.

In the unbearable, sultry days of early September Zeke foamed at the mouth. His motor followed the big new one around and around the lake. When old Boyter was through for the day, he shot in to the Pocket, and Zeke, frenzied though he might be, kept out.

The first day of the September gales lashed the lake into the peculiar fury of inland waters. It was impossible to venture out more than a few yards from shore. The wind was followed by a tropical deluge of rain that obscured both water and land. It was agreed by the fishermen that Zeke in his cowardice would be sitting safe by his light-wood hearth fire. They left the Pocket and went home to their own.

"Mart," said Florry, after the rain had lifted, "ain't thet smoke yonder in the Pocket?"

Zeke had gone in by land and made one gigantic bonfire of traps, seines, rowboats and the new motor-boat.

"You buzzards should of knowed better," Cap'n Tack said mildly. "You should of had you some watchment. I'm thu with fishin'. I got no cash money to start you off agin. Go git you a job fer hoe-hands."

IV

Rations had been regular the year Mart fished with Boyter. When a fishing week was lean, Cap'n Tack let them have grits and white bacon and water-ground meal just the same. With plenty of fish and wild mustard greens, they had lived well. Mis' Boyter had a scrub milch cow and sometimes sent Florry a can of clabber-milk. Blackberries were plentiful that summer, and huckleberries and blueberries, for the piney-woods had not been burned over. Long, sweet paw-paws were ripe in August. Florry's lean frame took on a few pounds of flesh. The malaria did not return and her golden-tanned cheeks were like sun-ripened guavas. Her quick squirrel eyes were clear and bright.

Well-nourished, strong, conception took place within her. It was strangely fortuitous. Neither was amorous of nature. Passion for her seized the man as briefly, if as necessitously, as flames that lick the turpentine pines when forest

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fire moves through. The meagre delights of her sparse body were no more to him than the pleasures of a drink or two of the hot, raw 'shine old Boyter sometimes passed around. If they were together, side by side of pleasant nights on the stoop of the cabin, it was usually comfort enough.

"A young un won't make no pertickler diff'rence, I reckon," Mart said.

He was driven to finding work not so much with conscience toward the coming child, as because, with credit stopped at Cap'n Tack's and Florry on short rations once more, she dropped back rapidly to her old gauntness. She made no complaints. If the growing belly pinched her with hunger, she borrowed a little of Mart's snuff to lip. That satisfied for the time. If it had not been for Cap'n Tack's sardonic injunction to the fishermen to take jobs as hoe-hands, it would perhaps never have occurred to Mart to hire out to another man. He was not of a breed that took to work for others.

He had been thinking over his problem when the Yankee came to him. The man did not seem to recognize Mart as the trapper of two years before, whom he had ordered off his forty acres. Crackers, like niggers, looked much alike to his complacency. The Yankee did not get along well with the negro help. The other unemployed white men had all refused him. His last tenant farmer, a negro, had walked off. He needed a man to live on his place and work his orange grove. He could not pay an inexperienced man very much—four dollars a week, his house, and land to garden for himself.

Mart's impulse was to send the man about his business. Florry's lean face with the quick, wild-animal eyes flashed before him. He accepted the job. He was depressed as he told Florry what he had done. She was in a fiercer panic at the thought of living close to another house; close to Yankees. But a canniness for the child moved her, and she found courage to follow Mart to the dirty tenant house in the orange grove.

The negro family had left the house a sty. The Yankee owner had not troubled himself to determine its condition. In her bare, clean life it was Florry's first experience with filth. She found refuge from her unhappiness the first week in scouring the place from end to end. She ran down cockroaches one by one. The sagging walls were crudely papered by former occupants with newspapers and magazine pages, glued to the wall with a gummy paste made of flour and water. Spiders and roaches were thickly nested behind them. Mart made her a new shucks scrub, dried corn husks inserted in holes in a block of wood, the handle set in at a convenient angle. She took satisfaction in its thick wet swish on floors and walls.

"I kin hear you a-scrubbin' t'other end o' the lot," Mart said.

The Yankee home was occupied from September to May. Cap'n himself was mean and miserly, but his family, headed by a young wife, made holiday through the winter. There was a constant coming and going of high-voiced people. The front gate was just within range from Florry's sagging front porch. Carefully concealed, she watched brightly dressed women get out of automobiles and walk up the path, shrieking with pleasure. The Cracker speech was soft as velvet, low as the rush of running branch water. The foreign voices were a constant alarm.

Florry kept out of sight whenever possible. The sulphur well that supplied the tenant house was a hundred yards away. When she went for water, a pail in either hand, her graceful tread stiffened self-

(Continued on page 446)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is America Slowing Up?

By J. J. SPENGLER

What does the 1930 census mean to us? The economic and social implications set forth by an economist are of enormous importance to those of us who are to be in the thick of American life for the next few years.

Nor since Watt upset the centuries-old economic life of Europe by inventing the steam engine has a nation faced a revolution in economic and social life such as confronts the American people to-day. Two decisions, only, are possible. The one may bring all of us within the welcome shower of the horn of plenty. The other will paralyze the already palsied wheels of industry and commerce and pave the way for the doctrines of Nikolai Lenin and the practices of Joseph Stalin. Such, in effect, is the set of conditions revealed by the recent census.

I

This revolution grows out of the fact that the American population which for a century and a third has been the most rapidly multiplying on the face of the earth has practically ceased to grow. Between 1790 and 1930, thanks to the stork and the immigrant, the American Leviathan increased almost thirty-one fold from 3,900,000 at Washington's first inauguration to 122,775,046 at the close of Mr. Hoover's inaugural year. From 1790 to 1860 immigration and a high birth rate enabled us to increase at a rate of about 35 per cent per decade. The outbreak of the Civil War slackened this unparalleled rate of growth, yet our numbers continued to multiply at slightly in excess of 20 per cent every ten years until 1910. Since 1910 we have increased at about 16 per cent per decade. By now, however, the complex of forces which already has halted population growth in France, England, and Germany has become so effectively mobilized as to make it inevitable that within a generation population in the United States will have ceased to grow and may actually have begun to decrease. We may look forward to an increase of between 17 and 30 millions at the utmost by about 1950, when our numbers will have become stationary. Most of this increase will take place during the next 15 years.

A rapid decline in the net inflow of immigrants, coupled with a rapidly decreasing birth rate, accounts for this inevitable slackening in American population growth. The decline of the birth rate which is relieving population pressure in parts of Europe, combined with our restrictive immigration laws, has cut down European immigration from about one million per year to several hundred thousands. Even this latter figure is cut into half by Europeans returning home. Immigration from countries

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the Western Hemisphere has also declined and will probably be fixed at a low maximum by Congress in the near future. In short, the source from which directly and indirectly we secured over 50 millions since 1790 is rapidly being dried up by legal barriers and contraceptives.

More important than the decline in immigration is the rapid decline in the American birth rate. For decades large families were the rule in America and we maintained a birth rate in excess of 40 per 1,000. By 1918–1922 this rate had fallen to 23.5; since then it has declined one fifth to 18.9. Yet even a rate of 18.9 is possible at the moment only because our population contains an abnormally high proportion of persons in the reproductive age of life. The disappearance of this abnormality will be accompanied by a further decline in the birth rate and by an increase in the death rate. In 1928 the birth rate exceeded the death rate by 7.8 per 1,000 because of this abnormal age composition. Had the age composition been normal, the birth rate would have exceeded the death rate by only 2.1. At present there is practically no *true* natural increase. As the average expectation of life is about 60, our true death rate is about 16.7 per 1,000. Hence when the birth rate has declined to 16.7, natural increase will cease.

The economic significance of this rapid cessation of population growth is not apparent to the ordinary layman who has never witnessed an actual instance of such a decline as we may look forward to. France does not afford an example, for there the decline has been very gradual; furthermore, the economic organization of France differs markedly from ours. Our economic life has been attuned, as Doctor C. E. McGuire points out, to an ever increasing consumption. Our real problem, therefore, is one of adjusting our national economic life to a new set of conditions. Our national income, agriculture, real-estate values, wage rates, types of goods consumed, methods of utilizing labor and possibly forms of business fluctuation will be affected. In André Siegfried's words we shall have come of age.

As with man, so with the nation, coming of age will bring new responsibilities. In order to meet this new set of conditions of national adulthood our intellectual, business, commercial, and labor leaders will need to co-operate in a manner hitherto unprecedented and actually forbidden by our laws. Otherwise federal and state governments will be compelled to intervene in the conduct of our economic life. In the absence of either mutual co-operation or state intervention economic depression will stalk the land and our masses will become easy prey to the preachings of Moscow.

II

The steady slackening in the rate of our future population growth will retard the rate of increase in our national income, and hence retard the increase in national wealth. Wealth, in and of itself, is unimportant to man, for it is merely the reservoir of goods and services from which the stream of national income flows. What man is primarily interested in is not the source but the flow. This we shall consider.

The national income of a population depends essentially upon its productivity. Total national productivity in turn depends upon growth in population, upon increases in capital equipment, and upon the introduction of new methods of production. Our total realized national income, according to the estimates of Professor Copeland, increased from 35.7 billions of dollars in 1913 to about 89 billions in 1928, an increase of nearly 150 per cent. During the same

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

period our population increased about 25 per cent. A large portion of this 53.3 billions increase in the national income was due to the fact that our population increased by more than 23 millions. Consequently, when our population ceases to grow our national income will no longer increase as rapidly as it would if our numbers were increasing.

Only those who are infected with big-number megalomania are interested in national income, however. What is of importance to the individual is not the total income but the average income. Between 1913 and 1928 the total income increased much more rapidly than did population. In other words, average income increased from $621 in 1913 to about $742 in 1928, an increase of about 20 per cent. This increase in average income, however, does not mean that all classes of our population enjoyed an equal rate of increase, or that the same rate of increase has been experienced throughout this period. In a recent study Professor King shows that since 1909 the average amount of purchasing power going to property owners and entrepreneurs has increased only about half as rapidly as the purchasing power of the industries which they controlled. Average annual earnings of wage earners have mounted steadily while the average real income of many salaried employees was lower in 1927 than in 1909. Professor King concludes that "the average American was approximately one-third better off in 1927 than he was in 1921."

The increases in average income which we have described took place during a period when our population was increasing rapidly. What is of primary interest to all of us, therefore, is whether or not average real income will continue to increase when population growth slackens. The answer of the economist is double-edged. Provided those who control our economic system adjust themselves to the new set of conditions, average income will increase more rapidly when population has become approximately stationary than it has in the past when our numbers were multiplying rapidly. Even then, however, certain classes will suffer relatively at least as a result of cessation in population growth.

Per capita income depends in the last analysis upon per capita productivity, which in turn depends upon the relationship between population and resources. Up to a certain point increase in population makes possible more cooperation among men and the use of efficient methods of production not possible when population is scattered. This state, economists call the stage of increasing returns, which means that the average output per individual is increasing. Eventually, however, further increases in population multiply wastes and occasion a decline in average output and hence in average income. This second stage, known as decreasing average returns, has characterized advanced European countries and the United States for some time. Consequently, further increases in population, even though they do not result in a decrease in average income, necessarily retard further increases in average income. For this reason primarily, and for no other, is a stationary population economically superior to a growing population.

What has been said will strike the ordinary reader either as inconsistent or as paradoxical. The income figures I have given show that average income has been increasing right along. Yet I say that we are living in the stage of diminishing returns. Wherein lies the answer? The increase in average income was made possible by new inventions, by the use of new methods, and by additions to our capital equipment. These

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inventions, methods, and additions were not caused by population growth. They would have been introduced even if our population had remained stationary since 1910. In fact, had our population been stationary, we could as a nation have saved more per capita, and thus have enjoyed a greater per capita income during the past decade than we have enjoyed. In short, had our population become stationary twenty years ago, average real income to-day would be not about $742 but in excess of $742.

A steady increase in population speeds up the exhaustion of natural resources which cannot be replaced, such as coal, gas, oil, minerals, and certain fertilizers. Our industrial civilization is founded upon energy and minerals even as Græco-Roman civilization was founded upon agriculture. Many of our mineral and energy supplies are quite limited in amount. Even coal which is still abundant will become more costly in the near future when we shall have creamed off the easily obtainable supplies. Consequently, unless we invent new sources of energy and mineral supplies, we shall have to devote ever larger parts of our labor and capital to securing these supplies. This means we shall have smaller portions of labor and capital left to produce and distribute the things which we consume directly and which really determine our scale of living. In light of this analysis, therefore, if a nation can enjoy an income of $742 per capita whether the population numbers 92 millions as in 1910 or 123 millions as now, it is more desirable to have a stationary population of 92 millions. For with the latter population our non-replaceable fuel and mineral supplies would last one third more years.

The analysis here presented is not theoretical. The present depressed state of industry in England is due in large part to the exhaustion of her fuel and mineral supplies, just as the low average income in Japan, China, and India is due to a definite lack of fuel and mineral supplies. Had the English population increased less rapidly, England would be in a better position to-day to carry on until possible substitutes for fuel and minerals could be invented or discovered.

In brief, in a stationary population every economic force, *if given opportunity,* will strain to increase average production and consumption. Numbers no longer need press on natural resources. Furthermore, since a stationary population will contain a smaller proportion of unproductive youth, average productive capacity can be increased about one-tenth. This increased productive capacity may, in turn, give birth to more machines and newer methods and thus render possible unparalleled prosperity. Whether such will be the result, depends, as we shall indicate, upon what our business leaders do.

III

A stationary population will affect the incomes of different classes of the population in different ways. Real-estate owners, agriculturalists, and certain other classes will either experience no further gains, or gains relatively lower than those enjoyed by the masses of the population.

Real-estate values in any one section depend primarily upon the demands of the population residing there. In the past, real-estate values in this country have advanced steadily, because in practically all parts of the United States population was increasing and the demands for any one location were skyrocketing. For several more decades, so long as our population continues to increase, real-estate values will on the average continue to advance. Peak average values will

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be reached about 1950 and will thereafter remain comparatively constant.

When, about 1950, average real-estate values cease to climb, the all too-well-fed realtors will probably begin to emit cries of distress and howl for relief at the heels of sympathetic legislators. Ordinary horse-sense makes it obvious to any one, however, that failure of average real-estate values to rise is not undesirable. The nature of a location is not changed by the fact that its value advances or fails to advance. As a nation we are no better off to-day because the average value of sites is worth more than in 1910.

The failure of real-estate values to mount after 1950 will not prove disadvantageous therefore. At the most, failure of values to rise will lead to income and profits taxes instead of further taxes on real property. And those who expect to fatten on an unearned increment will have to go to work instead.

During the next generation real-estate and land values will increase in many sections of the country; in some they will remain stationary; in some they will decrease. Even after 1950 real-estate values in certain sections of the country will increase, whereas those in other sections will decline correspondingly. On the whole, while average land values will continue to increase for several decades, the striking changes in future values in different sections of the country will grow out of internal population movements. Population will move from some to other sections of the country and thus cause land values to rise in the latter. This internal flow of population is strikingly illustrated in figures of the recent census which show that in certain States such as Florida and California population increased by one-half, whereas in other States absolutely no increase took place. Other census studies and surveys by the Chamber of Commerce reveal similar shifts in population. When completely compiled the present census returns will also reveal definite shifts of the population to the suburbs and outskirts of urban and metropolitan centres.

Counter-flows in population make it difficult to determine in what sections land and real-estate values will be altered most significantly. The townward trek from the farm will probably continue until not more than 30 millions or one-fifth of our ultimate population will reside on farms. Despite the comparatively high birth rate of the farm population, the census returns and other studies reveal that since the farmers' last prosperous year, 1920, the farm population has decreased at about one-half million per year. The addition of these four million ex-farmers to town and city populations has necessarily favored an increase in urban land values. Where this influx of 4 millions pushed up land values, however, it is not easy to say, as I shall indicate.

The location of industry, while partly affected by population, largely determines where population will move and hence where land values will rise. At present important migrations of industry are in process. Industry is expanding most rapidly in the Pacific States and in the east North Central and east South Central States and in the South generally. Everywhere branch plants are multiplying as a means of cutting transportation costs and speeding up the delivery of goods to dealers. Manufacturing plants are even moving to the country outside of city boundaries and to small towns in order to escape freight congestion, high land costs, and exorbitant taxes, and to secure cheaper labor in non-urban districts. Between 1919 and 1925 cities of over 10,000 lost from 8 to 14 per cent of their wage earners. In 1927, of 228 cases of plant removal, 126 moved to smaller communities. Special-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ized centres of industry, such as hog butchering in Chicago and collar manufacturing in Troy, are breaking up, and these products are being turned out in all parts of the country. On the whole, current census data show that small plants favor small cities, medium-sized plants predominate in large cities, and large plants occur most frequently in middle-sized cities. In essence, migration of industry is distributing plants more evenly throughout the country and thus is making possible many new economies and a more even distribution of population.

Unfortunately, this migration of industry is not checking the growth of towns, cities, and metropolises. For every wage earner who leaves the city for the open country, one and a fraction white-collar men and service dispensers move into larger communities. The economies of production in small towns made possible by the growth of roads, the new science of management which has made the smaller plant more efficient than the larger plant, and the development of electrical transmission which makes possible the export of cheap power to the countryside are therefore generally cancelled by other wastes. Since heat cannot be shipped, industries requiring heat must remain where heat is available, usually in cities. The exorbitant rates now charged for electric power necessarily check industrial decentralization. The prodigality of our producers which has permitted our marketing system to waste 10 billions annually also permits the multiplication of unneeded white-collared and overalled dispensers of "service," most of whom congregate in cities. Finally, a well-organized minority of vested urban interests continues effectively to delude gullible *homo sapiens* into believing that big-city life benefits him. We may, therefore, expect land values to continue to climb in the future nearly as sharply in urban centres as in areas adjoining towns and cities.

On grounds of economic efficiency the growth of cities of several hundred thousands ought to be checked. Were our social engineers to study city balance sheets, they would find not well-managed plants but rather politically costly and economically wasteful Molochs. In the city of 300,000 and over, even as in Megalopolis, wastes outstrip economies. This deficit comes out of the pocket-books of consumers. Perhaps some day they will overcome their inertia, revolt, and refuse any longer to nourish urban succubi.

To discourage urban growth is not to encourage an increase in the farm population. Economic circumstances are condemning the marginal farmer to abandon the farmstead. No urbanite offers to share the farmers' tax burden. No Grundy tariff wall can protect him from Canadian wheat or Argentine beef. No farmers' grange can insulate the farmhand from the lure of high industrial wages. No advertising panacea will substitute cotton for silk and rayon, or elemental foods for the items which bulk in the modern consumer's budget. No Jacquerie will protect this rugged individualist from the inroads of the machine. No modern alchemist is likely to transmute an appreciable volume of farm products into economically feasible and industrially utilizable materials; such as cornstalk paper and bagasse building material. An unsalable surplus is slowly strangling the marginal ruralite economically and socially.

Slackening in population growth coupled with other factors is multiplying deserted acres, ending the dream of an irrigated Southwest, and speeding rural-urban readjustment. Crop rotation, control of insect pests and plant diseases, increased use of mineral fer-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tilizers and manures, and improved equipment would enable less than the present farm population to double agricultural production. Even if our present population were to increase 30 per cent, and total consumption to advance correspondingly, our expert surplus would then increase over fourfold, O. E. Baker estimates. World population, world agriculture, and world purchasing power being what they are now and what they will be a quarter century from now, a dozen Farm Boards could not dispose of this marketable excess. Nor is it likely that the American people will increase milk and meat consumption enough to make payable the use of all existing farm acreage. Rather, with farmers losing nearly 2 billions of dollars on their 1927 operations, and with the average farmer earning only four-tenths as much as the average American, rural depopulation will continue and rural land values will decline until a satisfactory rural-urban balance has been struck.

IV

To none does cessation of population growth bring a more difficult problem than to the employer of labor. Upon labor depend both the demand for and the supply of goods. The employer of the future will need to provide work for an entirely different kind of working population than we have to-day. If he fails in this task there will be unemployment, lack of products, and absence of consuming power, not to mention lack of profits.

A stationary population will contain fewer young and more old persons than the present population. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company statisticians compute the ages of 100 males to be distributed as follows in 1870, 1900, 1920, and in a stationary population:

YEAR	0–19 YEARS	20–44 YEARS	45–64 YEARS	65 AND OVER
1870	49.5	34.9	12.6	2.9
1900	43.6	37.9	14.1	4.0
1920	40.3	38.2	16.9	4.5
Stationary	31.6	35.3	22.4	10.7

According to these figures, in a stationary population there will be one-fifth less folk under 20, one-third more aged 45–64 years, over twice as many aged 65 and over, and one-twelfth less aged 20–44 years. In short, future employers will have to employ more of the older workers because of the scarcity of younger workers. Hence the present policy of refusing to hire men aged 40 or more years will have to be abandoned.

Older workers are undesirable for three reasons. Their employment makes company insurance schemes more expensive and pension schemes more unworkable. In many fields the older worker is less efficient than the younger worker. The first two objections can easily be removed; but the third requires study. The problem of the future employer will consist in fitting each age group of workers in that class of jobs where a given age is least disadvantageous. Briefly, young workers will have to perform the heavy jobs while older workers accomplish tasks which are less onerous or require more skill. Several recent studies show tendencies in this direction, for already the number of older workers is increasing and that of younger workers is decreasing.

In order that we as a nation may effectively utilize this aging national labor supply, it is essential that we establish a Federal Labor Board to make possible the orderly marketing of labor. This Board would study and anticipate the needs of the country and would enable us to shift workers from places and occupations where there was a surplus of workers to places and occupations where

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there was a deficit. This Board would likewise enable us to put our educational system upon a sound working basis so that educational institutions would turn out only such types as were needed instead of the hodge-podge of half-trained and frequently unneeded classes now thrown onto the labor market each graduation.

In a stationary population those of working age are as numerous as in the present population. Those aged 65 and more years are doubly numerous but need occasion no difficulty. Our economic system, if efficiently operated, could employ all but those who wished to retire at 60. At present we waste a vast amount of potential female labor. In 1920, 78 out of every 100 males aged 10 or more years were employed; only 18 per cent of the women aged 10 or more years were employed. This 18 per cent probably ought to be increased to about 50 per cent to allow for women who worked on farms and in households but were not so reported. Even then it is plain that the number of women who could be employed and who desire employment is at least double the number now employed. This is especially true now that the small family system has become so common. The employment of this additional number of women would increase our annual output about one-sixth. In terms of dollars it would increase our average income around a hundred dollars. To make possible the employment of some 8 millions of women who are practically idle would require careful study by our proposed Federal Labor Board. This Board would need to determine what jobs women are specially suited to, and then reserve these jobs for women.

Many will contend that prevailing unemployment makes it undesirable to employ more women. This argument, however, is as absurd as the argument that we can adopt a 35-hour week. Unemployment is caused not by general unproduction, but by underconsumption and by underdevelopment of certain lines of industry. At present, half or more of American households live *below* a minimum comfort level. Even if our national income were divided equally the situation would not be greatly improved. Under existing conditions we can enable our population to produce the goods they desire only if we employ all males of working age a full five-day week and increase by 5 to 8 millions the number of women who are employed.

The advent of a stationary population by compelling us to solve the problem of the older worker will lead to the establishment of a Federal Labor Board whose studies and efforts will not only enable us to absorb the older workers, but practically to eliminate male unemployment and to double the number of employed women. As a result, average income will increase and retirement will become possible in the fifties.

V

The slowing down of population growth will alter national consumer demand in many ways. There will be more old and fewer young persons, families will be smaller, income distribution will be changed, free income will increase, cyclical unemployment may be cut down.

In a stationary population the proportion of youth will be one-fifth less and the proportion of persons aged 45 or more years will be half again as great. This means that the consumption of goods by young children and by persons in the teens will decline in some lines; in other lines no increase will take place. On the contrary there will be a marked increase in the demand for goods preferred by older persons. It is essential,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

therefore, that some of the capital and labor now employed in making infants' and children's goods flow into industries producing goods preferred by older persons such as housing, furnishings, Florida homes, sedate luxuries, mild amusements, comforts, health facilities, etc. Much new labor and capital must be directed into the production of the latter class of goods if future demands are to be satisfied.

The effect of the introduction of the small-family system upon consumption cannot be exaggerated. Already the amount of dwelling space per household has declined, and this decline has been accompanied by changes in the type of food, furniture, home furnishings and the like. The small-family system allows parents more leisure and thus permits the consumption of many kinds of goods and amusements denied to those tied down by family cares. More attention is given to education of children in the small family. Hence we may look forward to a great increase in high-school and college educational expenditures in the future. This emphasis upon child education will make for increase in adult education, for increased demands upon libraries, and for increased reading of intelligent magazines and books.

Future incomes will be more nearly equal than at present. The decline in the gross interest rate will cut down the rentier-incomes of the well-to-do and wealthy. The adoption of the small-family system will cut down the supply of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers relative to the number engaged in white-collar professional occupations. The incomes of the working class, therefore, will more closely approximate the incomes of the upper classes. This increased equalization of income will increase the relative demand for necessities and comforts and check the demand for luxuries and goods consumed for purposes of ostentation.

When population has ceased to grow, existing deficits in public amusements, parks, libraries, highways, hospital and health facilities, etc., can better be gauged and met. Reduced expenditures for educational buildings will permit increased expenditures for equipment and better-trained instructional staffs. The various sources of free income will accordingly be increased and will thus decrease existing differences among the levels of real incomes of different classes.

In the future less building will be necessary to meet needs of increases in population. There will also be less business uncertainty. Consequently, in so far as excess construction and business uncertainty help to cause economic depression and cyclical unemployment, we may expect a reduction in unemployment fluctuation in the future. This greater regularity of employment will in turn steady consumer demand.

The problem of the business man of to-morrow is to meet these changes in consumer demand. Industries which are greatly over-capacitated, such as agriculture, the motor industry, the shoe industry, etc., will have to shrink their capital investment. Large corporations will no longer accumulate great surpluses as at present, but will distribute nearly all their earnings as dividends and thus leave to the individual investor the problem of directing the flow of capital. Public utilities will have to exercise care so as to avoid overbuilding. The proposed development of an internal waterway system becomes questionable in light of the fact that demand for transportation facilities will not increase sharply in the future. In short, any business man, whether producer or distributer, who fails to gauge the changes in future consumer demand will find himself strangled by intensified competition.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VI

Whether the approach of a stationary state of population will be marked by a wide-spread increase in economic prosperity depends upon the manner in which our business leaders meet the problems I have described. A rapid slackening in population growth will increase the possibility of both overproduction and underconsumption. For in a stationary population it is much easier to overbuild plants than in a growing population. Overbuilt plants spell either cut-throat competition or a waste of capital, each of which makes for unemployment. Furthermore, if American industry fails to absorb the older workers, the proportion of unemployed will be vastly increased. If unemployment is increased, payrolls will shrink and prosperity will be smothered in the fog of depression, from which, in the absence of new population growth, rescue will be difficult. As evidence one needs only to point to the decade of depression in Great Britain, which is caused largely by failure to adjust to changes in population growth.

There is only one way out of this morass of possible economic depression. American economic life must be reorganized on a nation-wide basis. Rugged individualism must give way to national planning, either through the aid of the government or through increased cooperation among trades associations, chambers of commerce, industrial institutes, and similar organizations. Producers in given industrial fields must form combinations to facilitate an accurate forecast of the size of the market for their goods and an adjustment of the capacity of industry to the capacity of the market. Employers must co-operate with a Federal Labor Board if they are to use effectively the increased number of older workers. Ultimate solution of these production and labor problems will almost necessarily lead to a revision of our archaic anti-trust laws which are designed to promote a competition, largely wasteful in nature.

A satisfied people will never succumb to the ideology of Communism. Only the hungry and those who pity the hungry seek economic change. Capitalism's protection against Communism lies not in butchering agitators or in having Fish Committees scour the minds of Legionnaires and patriotic schoolmen, but rather in increasing the real income and security of the lower classes. If Communism can offer to the Russian people an average income greater than the average income of the lowest-paid 60 per cent of our population, Capitalism will inevitably succumb. Possibly, therefore, the answer to whether or not Capitalism will persist depends upon the manner in which our business leadership meets the acid test of a stationary population.

I have shown that the Malthusian Devil has been thoroughly chained up. I have suggested that chaining this Devil ought to unleash Unparalleled Prosperity. On the contrary, failure to meet the new set of conditions will simply aggravate Depression, and pave the way for the introduction of a communistic form of economic organization. With those who now control American enterprise lies the future.

The great test for survival of our civilization will come within two decades, predicts Mr. Spengler in "Need the Declining Birth Rate Imperil Western Civilization?" another important discussion of a pressing problem, which will appear in an early number. "The Prospect of Violent Revolution in the United States" by Frank Tannenbaum is another early feature.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jesus: A Replevin

By CHARLES HALL PERRY

This effort to recover Jesus in his original human simplicity from what the author terms "pious fiction" is peculiarly appropriate at this season of the year. Mr. Perry is the author of the articles in SCRIBNER'S on the advantages of the Catholic, Hebrew, and Protestant beliefs which attracted so much attention.

WHEN the Man of Nazareth was born, mankind gained a unique personality destined to be the major influence of thought, faith, and morals. Accounting for the regenerative vitality of his life and teaching has involved many interpretations. One fact remains strangely and exceptionally real. His efficacy was in his individual self. If not alone as a prophet of human reality, yet his supremacy has never been challenged. Though his value was little recognized by his contemporaries, yet his impress upon humanity has never been eradicated or superseded. Philosophies, sciences, dogmas, manners have had their day. They have been discarded as partial or false. But the truth of Jesus has stood against ecclesiastic distortions and sceptical analyses.

Estimated by popular standards his life was a failure. He was thwarted by misunderstanding and controversy; followed half-heartedly by a few fishermen and peasants; antagonized by the thinking men of his day; condemned and executed as a dangerous and blasphemous zealot. But when we measure success by ultimate appeal, the triumph of Jesus transcends every other social and spiritual victory. His life and his words have become the criterion of human excellence. It is man at his best. He gave God to men, answering the search of the races and ages for Deity. The theories of cosmogony—creation or evolution—were unknown to him. He simply declared man's inherent status as divine, with an inalienable sonship to God. He lifted all human relations to the height of brotherhood. He put moral mettle into life. Like all intrinsic revelations the axiomatic simplicity of his truth is the marvel.

II

Jesus was born of humble and entirely obscure parentage. He lived and worked until he was thirty years old as a peasant carpenter in an insignificant village of northern Palestine. He never travelled outside of a few square miles of territory. He was a Galilean Jew. That meant that he was provincial in every way—associative and religious. Galilee was as inspiring as nature could fashion it—rugged and beautiful. But its people were rustic, primitive, and insular. They were a portion of the Hebrews ignored and despised by the master minds of the race. "Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." The rabbinical learning of Judea was unknown to Jesus. The science, litera-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ture, and history of his time never penetrated to Nazareth. Egypt, Greece, and Rome with their art, learning, and enterprise were as far away as the stars. That cosmopolite cognizance, which makes for breadth and culture, never touched his life. Even the names of the profound thinkers and religionists before him—Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Buddha, and a hundred others—he probably did not know. Perhaps this all was fortunate. His mind was virgin soil, where the seed of the tree of life took root and grew without alienation.

He was a man of one idea. In that he was the comrade of every superlative genius. It is the passion for excellence. It dominates. The philosopher with his reasoning; the scientist and realities; the artist with his harmony, book, or picture; the gardener and his roses; the mother with her child. With Jesus it became an indomitable purpose to work the miracle of miracles—a manhood satisfying to the God who made man in his own image—a Son of God.

This Jesus was a dreamer of visions. In that he was racially Hebraic, as those inspired vision-seers of the Old Testament, to whom heaven was opened and with whom Jehovah talked. He listened to the discussions of the village men, who gathered after hours in his father's shop. Hamlet gossip, national discontent, unrealized religious hopes, puzzlements of ancient prophecies and splendors, Jahveh and man. He listened, absorbed, and went out under the stars, into the wild slopes of Tabor, a mount of sacred memories. There he dreamed his visions. There God met him in the sanctuary of his soul. There the summons called him and the messianic idea thralled again a chosen man. The strange temptation for expediencies and popular appeals assailed him. He came clean and uncompromising. Until he was thirty years old—matured and certain—he held his peace in silence. Then his overcharged mind and soul broke into speech. He declared his visions. His neighbors and companions laughed. Merriment is so often the first response of contented orthodoxy to a spiritual revelation. As he persisted, in their anger they drove him out with his heresies and fancies. It has never been realized that the divine is so close to man that the everyday is surcharged with heaven. This carpenter's son—one of their own boys—this presumptuous upstart—refusing orthodox authority—daring to assert a new humanism.

A few friends gathered about him and they went out into his little world of Galilee and Samaria. There, simply and with strange eloquence he told groups of peasant people the deep and spiritual truths which filled his heart. Soon a curious crowd thronged him. Here was something new, a novelty. It was reported that he could work wonderful miracles; that his talks were strangely different from the droning platitudes of the synagogue. He touched the submerged heart of their stagnant lives. Something imperishable within answered. They came from the fields, the shops, the fishing-boats, the kitchens —men, women, and children in a motley multitude. To him it was human life with its hungers, its ignorance, its unrealized possibilities. He had no outlook of a world religion, of a church, of warring sects, of feeble dogmatics, of persecutions, of strutting ecclesiastics, of gorgeous ceremonials—all in his name. Could he have foreseen, he might have closed his lips and gone back to his bench heart-broken. But there before him was human life, unknowing and unknown to all but God. One man, a horde of peasants—it was enough. His whole soul broke through as a torrent from the mount of inspiration. Then was spoken that supremely wonderful

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sermon on the Mount, a message to the common people of the centuries. It was a spiritual emancipation of which even that theistic arch-heretic, Voltaire, declared that Jesus then and there put a real religious concept in the place of superstition.

At last the crucial struggle summoned him. Not to Alexandria, where, under the Ptolemies, the most liberal schools of learning had flourished for three centuries. Neo-platonism and Gnosticism were not yet developed. Not to Rome, the centre of civilization, where luxury, power, and licentious mythology held sway. All he knew was Jerusalem. His Judaism drove him there, the Temple of Jahveh, the home of the ancient spiritual religion of his people. There, if anywhere, he must plant the tiny mustard seed of truth, yet, all unknowing that in time its branches would fill the far reaches of the earth, and become the shelter of the hope and faith of mankind. There the conflict must be met —his simple, spiritual, human gospel against the formal, dogmatic unreality of ecclesiasticism. The end was inevitable. He knew it instinctively. We know it historically. Never has a great soul declared the freedom of faith; the universal childhood of man to God; the barrenness of organic theology; the fictions of religious philosophies, which scholastic minds have worked out into schemes of salvation and impossible structures of Deity; but that the church has answered with Voltaire's famous invective, "*Ecrasez l'infame.*" He was crucified as a witness to the truth which made men free. The same fate would meet him to-day. Jesus of Nazareth was and is real—the divine Man. The Christ of the church is but the creation of dogma and theology.

The man to-day who would know the essential Jesus—the profoundest and truest life ever lived—must find him as a thread of golden biography woven through the Gospels. The legends which were interpolated, the pious additions by later copyists of the original manuscripts, the Hebraic and Pauline interpretations of simple stories and events are confusing. But the elimination is not difficult if one reads to find the spirit and purpose of Jesus himself. Paul's system of a substitutional Christology is not there. Nearly every tenet of the church's creation of a theologic Christ —his deity, his kingship, his place in between God and man, and, most unethical of all, his propitiatory sacrifice, met with denial from him. It remained for Augustine in the early fifth century to formulate a confused Christianity into the semblance of a barbaric religion. A depraved and lost humanity; an angry and savage God; an endless perdition; and the appeasement of divine justice by Christ's death. Quite naturally the Dark Ages obscured Europe for a thousand years. In the words of John Fiske, "It is hardly too much to say that three-fourths of the body of doctrine known as Christianity, unwarranted by Scripture and never dreamed of by Christ or his apostles, first took coherent shape in the writings of this mighty Roman." The great Reformation promised a religious housecleaning. But the dominant influence of Calvin held the Protestant church bound to the scholastic dogmatics, which deny God and do not know Jesus.

Is all this depressing? Far from it. There is a stirring in the hearts of men for a rehabilitation of Jesus of Nazareth. He must be reconceived in his original human simplicity. We may well remember that he was, at no time and in no way, an ecclesiastical figure. He was simply the friend and companion of the common people—wherever one or many would know God better and understand the meaning of human living. He was a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

socialist in the finest sense of dignifying all men with divine rights, because each and every one is a child of God. He arranged no dogmatics. He formulated no creed. He invented no liturgy. He established no church. He declared the highest excellence of human life and the intimacy of God. He sent his chosen friends out into the world to tell other men the truths which he had taught them—truths to live by, not to wrangle over.

The whole theology of Jesus is in the Lord's Prayer; his humanism succinctly expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, himself the seal of its perfection. We need nothing else or more for an entire creed and a satisfying religion. My contention is that Jesus must be known exactly as he was in Judea—what he said, what he did, what he was. Therein is humanity's hope and faith. How he died is of small consequence compared to how he lived. Other men and women have died as cruelly, with like bravery and charity. But no other ever had the heroism to live as he; no other so truly knew God. The church has its theologic Christ—its involved creation of religious metaphysics—its dead God upon a crucifix—its stranger, displayed in royal robes and golden crown upon frescoes and stained windows. Jesus of Nazareth wore homespun and sandals. He refused to be a God or a king. He desired, above all, to be a man among men. He was not a sacrament of the divine, but a perfection of the human—teaching men how to live, not how to die.

Should he come back to us in this twentieth century, where would we find him? In cope and mitre, seated upon a throne at splendid rituals? Presiding over a convention of ecclesiastical dignitaries? Or in shops and kitchens; on hillsides and meadows; finding a group of folks to talk to? Probably at Coney Island and Revere Beach; going up and down the streets with a throng of ordinary people, touching their hearts with the common sense of truths to live by courageously and unselfishly. They would learn to believe in God and in themselves—the two vital faiths.

III

The normalcy of Jesus is the explanation of his universal regeneration of the thought and standards of civilization. He is called the saviour of men. But his salvation has been religiously limited to a deliverance from sin and its consequences—death and hell. These have been the ugly scarecrows which the church has erected in the garden of the Lord, to keep men's feet in the narrow paths. For among the trees and flowers of life are enticing dangers. This spiritual neurosis has developed all the varieties of asceticism and insipid piety. Jesus did not save men from sin, but from self-righteousness; not from death, for that is a blessed and inevitable event in human evolution; not from hell, which is false to God's fatherhood. Jesus saved men from unreality, which in religion is superstition; in wisdom is arrogance; in society is anarchy. He spoke his words of emancipation—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Paul gathered the idea in his sterling capitulation—"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Both, perhaps, remembering the saying of the wise Proverbist—"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

To have become the inspiration and illumination of the centuries, Jesus must have been so humanly real that he could become the norm of all life. That is the most marvellous miracle about

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him—the universality of his appeal. Possessions, learning, environment, character, race, age, time, all disappear before the comprehension of Jesus. It all comes back to the fact that Jesus knew God as no other man ever knew Him. That knowledge is the radical of all human wisdom. He exemplified human life according to standards which we all acknowledge as truest and best; but which none of us has the unselfish courage to live. He declared a human society which no one denies would solve our puzzling relations; but which neither nations, churches, nor families have dared to attempt. The abyss between Jesus of Nazareth and modern Christianity is black with moral cowardice. We can approve, but we dare not emulate. It is vastly easier and more spiritually complacent to worship a dogmatic Christ-deity than it is to pattern one's life by the standards of the human Jesus. Chesterton has cynically said, "Christianity has not failed, for Christianity has never been tried."

To the unsubsidized observer of religion to-day it seems very plain that, while the person of Jesus holds confidence, church Christianity is losing its grip upon the interest of people. Ministers are solicitous to find the reason. Are they honest in their search—bolsterers of ecclesias or wise enough to use drastic surgery? They find it difficult to prevent the disquieting suspicion that the shores of the ancient and mediæval systems of theology, eschatology, and salvation are being weakened by the oxygen of reason. Perhaps by a reinstatement of Jesus of Nazareth in popular faith. It is no new condition. Sixty years ago, James Freeman Clarke, writing his "Ten Great Religions," interpreted the decadence in the religious appeal—"Instead of a life, Christianity became a church and a creed. When this took place, it gradually lost its grand power. It no longer preached truth, but doctrine; no longer communicated life, but organized a body of proselytes into a rigid church. Christianity has been partially arrested in its natural development, first by the Papal Church, and secondly by the rigid creeds of Protestantism." Undoubtedly, the building up an intricate system of tenets by the church has made a religious structure which is going to collapse by the weight of its fictitious logic. The invincible fact is the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the pleroma of all human life. To have made a God of him, in spite of his eagerness to be just the best he could be as a man, has been to wrong his purpose, to isolate him from human companionship, and to deprive us of our inspiring exemplar. No one of us could dare to emulate the character of God, even were He incarnate.

Somehow we must untangle Jesus of Nazareth from the theologies and creeds, which have usurped his straightforward manliness. The task faces a difficult snarl. It must combat a racial obsession and each man must do it for himself. Back of all idolatry is the racial impulse to deify an ideal—be it savage or holy—and then to worship it. That was where Greek Neo-platonism swamped Hebraic Monotheism, and interpreted Jesus as the Logos of a divine trinity. He was too excellent to be purely human. It was not a solitary deification. The Hebrews did that with Moses; the Chinese with Lao-tse; the Hindus with Siddârtha; the Christians with Jesus.

This making gods is a result of spiritual unfaith, a materialism that seeks a deity who is tangible, who can be codified. It is the business of priestcraft and scholasticism. The supreme gift of Jesus to the world is a conception of God which is forever satisfying. The eternal Father needs no second person to exemplify mercy and forgiveness; no third person to assure us of intimate compan-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ionship. He is all in all. The Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God, of which Jesus talked so much, is the supremacy of infinite love and the divine childhood of men. We must go back to Jesus of Nazareth for our theology, even though it compels us to surrender the whole body of church dogmatics. The God of Jesus is not the God of the church. That is plain enough. But the God of Jesus is completely satisfying and can win the love and loyalty of men. His own human excellence is difficult for us to attain. But it is a challenge and an inspiration. He has shown that it is possible.

IV

Finally, it becomes necessary to examine some of the dogmas, by which the theologians have accomplished the deification of Jesus and the consequent separation of him from complete identity with men. We may acknowledge that these dogmas are completely logical, reserving the fact that logic may be the most deceptive of all reasoning. One who reads Carlyle, the master annihilator of logic, will understand that. Logic consists of two parts—the assumptions and the argument. One cannot refute the reasoning if one allows the premises. That is the fallacy of scholastic theology. The dogmatists will not argue unless they are allowed their preceding assumptions and authorities. Therefore we will look at some of these tenets in the light of common sense, to see if there is not a possible release of the person of Jesus from a pious masquerade.

The discrimination between the theologic Christ and the human Jesus of Nazareth has been persistent since the opening of the Christian era. The church with its organization, centralized in the autocratic papacy, backed by subservient temporal powers, has always insisted, through councils and bulls, upon the antecedent deity of Christ—the eternal second person in the Trinity made flesh. As steadfastly the loyal lovers of Jesus—the transcendent Man—have stood against what seemed to them a denial of his perfect manhood, and an anthropologic idolatry. The protest against deification began with Jesus himself. As long as he lived, he insisted upon his complete and unmixed humanity. He would accept no other title than the Son of Man. "Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God." "My Father is greater than I." True he declared, "Before Abraham was, I am"—as the messianic idea is as old as Eden. "I and my Father are one." For that saying the Jews sought to stone him as a blasphemer. The answer of Jesus was conclusive. "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came . . . say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am a (the) Son of God?" The definite "the" is absent here in the Greek.

The Incarnation has become the central and most significant of the creedal statements, as it is the fundamental truth of life. As a dogma the church has limited its application to the birth from the Virgin Mary of a singular creature, half man and half God, or wholly man and wholly God—Jesus Christ. Jesus never seems to have recognized such an exclusion of other men from his entire humanness. To him, wherever life is, there is the divine, immanent presence—from the wild flower by the roadside to the perfection of personality in humanity. Physical and spiritual evolution may be written there. The Pantheist may have a vision of the goal and meaning of creation, as Nature and Man are the essential revelation of the Eternal Mind and Purpose. The an-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cient writer of Genesis, centuries before Jesus was born, declared the marvel of the Incarnation, that God made man in His own image, and breathed into him the breath of life—God's own life. The truth is all-inclusive, or else it loses its significance, and Jesus becomes an anomaly.

The dogma of the Virgin Birth, upon which the perversion of the truth of the Incarnation follows, not only is without adequate evidence, but it does violence to the human reality of Jesus. That gone, we lose our pattern and inspiration. The story in the opening of Luke's Gospel commentators generally acknowledge varies much from the style of the rest of his writing. It bears much evidence of interpolation. Matthew's account of the Virgin Birth is an effort to show that the miraculous birth of Jesus was in fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah—"A virgin shall conceive." But Matthew's quotation is erroneous, unless he had the English translation for reference. The prophet does not say that a "virgin" shall be with child. Had he meant that, he would have used the word commonly written in the Old Testament—*"bethulah,"* a virgin. But Isaiah's word was—*"almah,"* a young woman, married or single. This distinction between the two Hebrew words has been maintained by the leading Jewish scholars.

Here has been the battle-ground of dogmatics for nineteen centuries. For upon the Virgin Birth rests the whole of the church's Christology. It was denied in the first century. In the second century, Irenæus wrote his masterly but unconvincing defense. I commend it to those who wish to read the full orthodox position. Bear in mind that our English version is a late translation of fourth or fifth century Latin copies, the original Greek manuscripts having disappeared. The Arians fought it in the fourth century, and were beaten at the Council of Nice by the Alexandrian Athanasians. The dogma, with its consequent Mariology, was condemned in the fifth century by Pope Gelasius. For two centuries, the religious orders of the Dominicans and the Franciscans combated bitterly over these questions. It was only settled when the Papacy sided with the Franciscans. From that time the Virgin Birth has been unquestioned in the Catholic Church. A portion of Protestantism has adopted it on the evidence of Scripture. Another portion has as emphatically refused it on the ground of reason and textual exegesis.

It is worthy of consideration that the many Eastern religions have much in common. Hebraism was Oriental. The idea of the virginal birth of its leader is not peculiar to Christianity. According to tradition, Buddha was born of the virgin goddess, Maia. Similarly, the Fohi of China, the Shaka of Thibet, the demigods of Greece. It arises from the repugnant notion that sexual conception and childbirth defile a woman—even Mary was purified. That God and man are at the antipodes of life, and only an exceptional miracle can bridge the chasm is a relic of pagan dualism. The argument of the biological impossibility of such a miracle—if miracle were needed—is of small value. For scientists have accomplished monosexual reproduction in amœbic forms.

The only refutation of the dogma of the Virgin Birth must proceed from within—a replevin of the human Jesus of Nazareth from the usurpation of the theological Christ. It is not scepticism, but faith and loyalty. Not a desire to lower him, but an effort to recover him from pious fiction, and to make him real. So simply, wholly, and supremely human, that he becomes meaningful to other men. What did Maeterlinck mean when he said that man is a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

god who is afraid? Afraid of what? Probably of himself, of his inherent possibilities. Jesus of Nazareth is the saviour of men from fear, from the shame of an inferiority complex. He not only preached it; he demonstrated the reality of man's sonship to God, with its sequences of personal character and eternal hope. Sin and doubt, obstacles to overcome; pain, sorrow, and struggle, the shifting currents of the voyage; death, an illusion; life, a glorious adventure, replete with all the advantage of God's co-operation.

To have been that; to be that to-day; he must have been, without extraneous odds, the Man of men. He made no other claim. An exceptional origin, a peculiar relation to God, would have vitiated entirely his appeal to other men not likewise endowed. Mary never, in later years when he needed support, brought forth the miraculous birth of her son as evidence of his divinity. In fact she distinctly speaks of Joseph as the father of Jesus. Jesus never referred to a Virgin Birth. Neither Mark nor John records so fundamental an event. Both Matthew and Luke give genealogies of Jesus, difficult of reconciliation. Each is the blood line of Joseph, the husband of Mary.

Quite aside from the isolation of Jesus by deification, the dogma of the Virgin Birth introduces the element of the miraculous. That being conceded, the separation of Jesus from ordinary human conditions is complete. The Virgin Birth would necessitate a further miracle to give him human masculine traits, which Mary could not supply. It is from that supernatural interference with nature that we seek deliverance. Especially when, in the case of Jesus, the miracle accomplishes nothing, beyond destroying his place and purpose in humanity. Miracles are useless figments, born of a dependence for faith upon magic. They prove nothing, except a possible cosmic chaos. Religious miracles, compared with modern wonders, fade into insignificance. We would free Jesus of Nazareth from the handicap of the miraculous, thus making his life humanly real, his victories and wisdom normal. Only as born of sexual parentage, in the line of mankind's evolution, does he become the inspiration and ideal we need.

The church affirms also that Jesus was without original sin—whatever that is. Some taint from Adam; something inherited; perhaps innate tendencies to mischief. Also that Mary was immaculately conceived from her mother. So that Jesus had not even the gentle persuasions of female depravity. In what does this all result? Either in the creation of a new sort of man, or in the invention of an anthropologic deity. If this be true, then his clarity of nature and his perfection of character were given him at the outset. There was no place for temptations, narrowness, false estimates of values, uncleanness, and a hundred other insidious human enemies. The great Temptation becomes a farce, not a sublime triumph.

In Jesus of Nazareth there is absolutely no challenge for us, unless he had our nature, encountered and overcame the identical conditions which we know. Character is human likeness to God. It is not a gift, but a victory. Paul says that Jesus was in all points tempted like as we are. I believe that Paul was right. But it was an impossible condition unless he was as we are. Any sane man knows that, unless he is blinded by sanctimonious slavery. The great difference is that Jesus attained where we fail. It is that alone which sets him as the supreme Man of the race. Under conditions perhaps less advantageous than ours to-day, he demonstrated what faith in God and a passion for human excellence can accomplish—a Sonship of Man revealed as a Sonship to God.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Brown Decades: Architecture

By LEWIS MUMFORD

French chateaux on Fifth Avenue and Rhine castles for beer barons were the obvious products of the age. The World's Fair in Chicago betrayed and did not fulfil the promise of the Brown Decades. Mr. Mumford points out the true significance of the eccentric Louis Sullivan and of men like Richardson and Root who in those days planted the seed of our architectural growth which is just coming to flower in the 1930's.

When the Civil War broke, architecture in America had been sinking steadily for a generation. Order, fitness, comeliness, proportion were words that could no longer be applied to it: architecture was submerged in that morass of jerry-building, tedious archaicism, and spurious romanticism that made up the architectural achievement of the nineteenth century. Even the Crystal Palace which New York built in 1854 was a low imitation of the building which housed the London Exposition of 1851.

In the American farmhouses, the open fireplaces were already being boxed up to permit the more efficient operation of the iron stove, with its bulgy firebox and its ornamented legs; the simple Windsor chairs were retreating to the attic; the newly added porches were presently embellished with scroll-saw caprice; and in the seventies the mansard roof came, a crowning indignity.

The growing cities were even worse. Partly under the pressure of higher land values the rooms in city houses became narrower, as the house crawled over the remaining back-yard space; and the interiors became dark and airless: instead of being two rooms deep, as was the practice in the provincial city, they were now three and sometimes four deep on the lower floors. If the upper classes did not fully realize the dreadful housing problem that existed in the slums of every large city, where a multitude of poverty-stricken people lived in damp, sunless, airless rooms, it was partly because they themselves were gaily and rapidly building slums of their own, with almost as little concern for hygiene as they showed in their tenement properties.

Beauty was defined in terms of visible possessions: no house was thought fit to live in that did not contain truck-loads of ornament and bric-a-brac. With the steady growth of European travel among the richer classes, the acquisitive spirit throve; and presently the most fashionable architect of the Brown Decades, R. M. Hunt, was building French châteaux on Fifth Avenue, while less eminent rivals were building Rhine castles for brewers, or weird combinations of architectural souvenirs grouped together in structures that had the logic and taste of a what-not.

Looking back over the previous hun-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dred years to the time when there was but one professional architect in the whole country, one might have made the generalization that, as the number of architects increased, the number of satisfactory buildings had proportionately diminished. The generalization might be misleading; but the facts were indisputable. Architecture, on the downgrade since the twenties, had by 1860 almost touched bottom.

II

Before the Civil War no one had emerged who was capable of facing the problems of building in the spirit that Walt Whitman had sought to face those of poetic expression. There was a great deal of loose talk about an architecture appropriate to industrial society; many people thought that iron and glass were the "coming" materials; but since the architects of the day had forgotten how to use stone or brick with adroitness, there was small prospect that they would be capable of establishing architecture on a new basis. The brittle classicism of the eighteenth century had broken; the vernacular had become corrupt; and nothing positive had taken their places. Before every new manifestation of industrial society in cities and buildings, the word "ugly" became inescapable.

Within thirty years the situation had changed: the foundations of a new architecture had been laid. Architecture was reunited to city development in the boulevards and parks designed in New York, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Kansas City, and many other communities; and in the eighties, for the first time if one exclude such happy accidents as the mills at Manchester, N. H., the problem of architectural comeliness was considered in relation to workers' housing in the well-intentioned but misdirected plans for Pullman, Ill. Sculptors, painters, workers in glass and iron appeared as accessory to the architect in a country where only sixty years before a poor wretch was released from jail since he was the only person in New York competent to cut the marble for the city hall.

More than this: between 1880 and 1895 the task and method of modern architecture were clarified through the example of a group of American architects whose consistent and united efforts in this line antedated, by at least a decade, the earliest similar innovations in Europe. Modern architecture had its beginning in this period; and though no one has taken the trouble to investigate the totality of work done during these years, much less to publish the best examples, one needs only to walk about the central business portion of Boston, or the Loop of Chicago, or to keep one's eyes open here and there in almost every centre, to see beneath years of grime, many alterations, and the disfigurement of competitive advertisements the first experimental efforts to work out the form of an office-building, an urban factory, a hotel, in terms of their inherent possibilities.

How did this change come about? In back of it stands the figure of a colossal man, Henry Hobson Richardson, an architect who almost single-handed created out of a confusion which was actually worse than a mere void the beginnings of a new architecture. No single mind since Wren's has perhaps left such a large impress of his own personality, not alone through his work, but through that of his successors; and no one has demonstrated better in practice the qualities that are necessary for a complete orchestration of all the personalities and forces concerned in building. His life merits a brief recapitulation.

Richardson was born in Louisiana in 1838. His mother was a daughter of Joseph Priestley, the famous eighteenth-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

century radical; and Richardson would have entered West Point had he not had, like his grandfather, an impediment in speech. He was graduated from Harvard in 1858, and in 1859 he went over to France to prepare himself for the Ecole des Beaux Arts, to which he was admitted in 1860. Being out of funds during the War, he never left Paris; but he had the good fortune to gain a living by working under Labrouste while he pursued his studies. When Richardson came back to America in 1865 he brought with him, unlike R. M. Hunt, no obvious French tags or labels; what he had absorbed was a method of analysis and a capacity for intense work.

Richardson was an architect in his bones: a solid worker with a respect for all his fellow workers, making his presence felt in every department of building. In stature, ideas, and habits of mind he was a curiously close counterpart of William Morris: he had the same bulky figure and large head and bluff, full beard—the build and driving force of a bison. Unlike Morris, however, he did not write, and such ideas as he had about his art were articulated chiefly in the act of building. But though the makings of a great architect were in young Richardson, he had much to learn; and during his first ten years of practice he went through the usual Victorian experience of working in Gothic, from which he felt his way back to the more elementary masonry forms of the Southern French Romanesque. The Trinity Church in Boston, his most important achievement before 1880, still belongs to the period of preparation.

Richardson had escaped from the dominant styles of his period, those which a later critic facetiously referred to as the Victorian Cathartic, the Tubercular or Queen Anne Style, and the Cataleptic Style, with its complete suppression of all that would indicate life; but he had still to find a modern idiom, and meanwhile his own efforts with the heavy Romanesque earned, not altogether unjustly, the epithet "dropsical." The most obvious features of his design were the heavy courses of rough-finished stone, often in contrasting colors; the round arches for entrances, and the romantic towers: and it is these marks, which were taken up by architects like Halsey Wood and often caricatured by less capable men, that have remained in the popular mind as definitely Richardsonian. He was, without doubt, for the greater part of his life, purely a romantic architect, seeking to create by traditional devices an effect comparable to that produced by other cultures and remoter ways of life: the effect of age, antique strength, religious energy.

So far Richardson was on the wrong track. Had he died before 1880, he would have to be classed with Pugin, Scott, Viollet-le-Duc, and Cuypers, men who respected sound building, who adored the early Middle Ages, and who wished to renew other than classic harmonies and proportions—an honest but wholly derivative architect, the precursor of that vast tribe of eclectics who now beg and borrow from the rag-bags of the past the details and feelings which will cover up their own inability to conceive strictly or carry out competently any genuine æsthetic problem. But Richardson grew steadily both in architecture and in his comprehension of the needs and opportunities of modern life: he was still growing when his career was cut short by his death in 1886. His latent powers are even more important for us than his achievements.

Richardson was the first architect of distinction in America who was ready to face the totality of modern life; and as soon as he began to design railroad-stations for the Boston & Albany line, he was already on the road toward a new

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conception of architecture, since, search where he would, he could find nothing in the nature of a suburban railway-station even dimly to remind him of other architectural solutions. In designing such a structure, one was forced either to face the elements and work with them, or become stultified.

It was part of the "Victorian compromise" to evade this problem by confining Gothic architecture to churches and schools, to use classic or Renaissance motifs on public buildings, and to turn over buildings like factories, offices, and railroad-stations to engineers and contractors who had no particular concern with beauty. Richardson rejected that compromise. In a series of designs, he showed that such a rejection was not merely inevitable, but that it afforded the starting-point for a new architecture which, like all the valuable examples in the past, would belong to its own day and grow out of current needs.

Richardson was already at the beginning of this conception in his interior plans for public libraries; he went farther in his railroad-stations, with their emphasis upon the covered platform and their bold effort to achieve a maximum of light in the waiting-rooms. In a similar spirit, he turned to the simple cottage of wood and created one that, for the first time, blended with the reds, greens, and browns of the Northern landscape; finally, in the Glessner House in Chicago, he achieved a residence which was on all fours with the sound and straightforward Marshall Field Warehouse, done in 1885—perhaps the most freshly and logically conceived masonry structure to be built in America up to that time. Domesticity and industry, culture and work, were at last on a common footing once more: the utilitarian and the romantic had emerged from their false opposition.

Richardson died just as the transition from masonry to steel-frame construction was being made; he died too early to assist in this transition, or to apply to it his own powerful, masculine imagination; but there is little doubt that the man who welcomed the problem of the railroad-station, whose pencil was busy with sketches for ice-houses and similar industrial plants, who wished to design the interior of a river steamboat, would have made the transition from one system of construction to another—a change accurately comparable to the gap in evolutionary order between the crustaceans and the vertebrates—with even more decisiveness than his successors.

Richardson had already abandoned the tags of Romanesque ornament; he had stripped architecture down to the fundamentals of masonry construction, and had at last arrived at a satisfactory conception of the modern architect's task. He beheld the promised land, and as the most influential architect of his time, he tasted the grapes of success; but he did not enter it.

III

Richardson's influence in Chicago was a happy one. There were, in particular, two architects who had felt it when it was only a tendency toward romantic expression, and who in the eighties, encountering Richardson's mind in its most mature phase, drew from it the inevitable lesson.

One of these architects was John Wellborn Root. Root was, like Richardson, a Southerner, whose father—a New Englander—had wished to study architecture but had instead opened a dry-goods shop in Lumpkin, Ga. Born in 1850, Root was trained in the office of one of the leading exponents of Gothic architecture, that of Renwick, the designer of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, and, like Daniel Burnham, he was drawn to Chicago in response to the vast

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opportunity created by the Chicago fire. In 1873, Root and Burnham, who had been working in the same office, formed a partnership on the prospect of doing a large suburban development for a realty company; and the firm of Burnham & Root, combining the adroit business imagination and practical enthusiasm of one with the sound æsthetic imagination of the other, rapidly rose to eminence.

John Root's life as an independent architect was even shorter than Richardson's; and his original training and culture were not nearly so broad, although he had studied for a while at the College of the City of New York, and had a deep love for music. His many city mansions and office-buildings do not show the steady logical progression of Richardson's enlarging imagination. But Root was intellectually more articulate than Richardson, and he took part in that general ferment of ideas which made the better architects of Chicago conscious of their general mission and willing to impose upon themselves the discipline necessary to its fulfilment. The Cataleptic Style, the trance of dead forms, had never taken root in that city; if the architecture was often crude and barbarous, it was nevertheless alive.

"In America," Root said once in a lecture, "we are free of artistic traditions. Our freedom begets license, it is true. We do shocking things; we produce works of architecture irremediably bad; we try crude experiments that result in disaster. Yet somewhere in this mass of ungoverned energies lies the principle of life. A new spirit of beauty is being developed and perfected, and even now its first achievements are beginning to delight us. This is not the old thing made over; it is new. It springs out of the past, but it is not tied to it; it studies the traditions, but is not enslaved by them. Compare the best of our recent architecture—some of Richardson's designs, for example—with the most pretentious buildings recently erected in Europe. In the American works we find strength and fitness and a certain spontaneity and freshness, as of stately music, or a song in the green woods."

Root's observation was not far-fetched or inaccurate; it was echoed, too, by the one real critic of architecture that America has produced, Montgomery Schuyler, whose "American Architecture" is a neglected landmark in architectural criticism. In the Monadnock Building, still working in a masonry tradition, Root took Richardson's example one step farther, and carried the design of the tall building—it was fifteen stories—as far as it was possible to go without reconstructing the terms of the problem. Its actual design shows the important part that was played in establishing a sound foundation by the pressure of business men who corrected the architect's whimsies and vagaries by a strong sense of practical needs. I quote from Miss Harriet Monroe's biography of Root:

"For this building [the Monadnock] Mr. Aldis, who controlled the investment, kept urging upon his architects extreme simplicity, rejecting one or two of Root's sketches as too ornate. During Root's absence of a fortnight, Mr. Burnham ordered from one of the draftsmen a design of a straight up-and-down, uncompromising, unornamented façade. When Root returned, he was indignant at first over this project of a brick box. Gradually, however, he threw himself into the spirit of the thing, and one day told Mr. Aldis that the heavy sloping lines of an Egyptian pylon had gotten into his mind as the basis of this design, and that he thought he would throw the whole thing up without a single ornament."

It was a wise decision: even the grada-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion of the bricks from a deep brown at the bottom to a yellow at the top, which Root was prevented from doing only by lack of time, might have marred the fine severity of the design, whose sole interest, apart from the strong silhouette, was derived from the projecting bays of windows that carried sunlight into rooms that otherwise would have been lost in darkness behind piers of masonry fifteen feet thick at the bottom. At the time, Montgomery Schuyler pronounced the Monadnock Building the best of all tall office-buildings. He was right. It was by far the best thing done in masonry; and its windows were more inventively planned than that of the Auditorium Building, which followed it.

IV

While Root had finally stripped the face of the office-building, making it as austere as a steamship, as nicely adapted to its purpose as the elevators that had begun to glide up and down in the seventies, a final clarification of the structure was going on from within. The heavy masonry walls necessary for a fifteen-story building took away both light and valuable space. Meanwhile, the cheapness of cast iron and later rolled steel had suggested the use of steel beams for floor and steel columns to assist the masonry piers. Two Chicago architects, Messrs. Drake and Wight, contributed the invention of steel columns with air-chambers and fire-clay around them; finally, the complete steel skeleton was articulated in Holabird & Roche's Tacoma Building (1888), and the outside walls, instead of being supporting members, became only a fireproof curtain. The priority for the invention of the steel frame has been disputed; it was claimed, among others, by L. H. Buffington, a Minnesota architect; but the question becomes a little absurd when one remembers that the traditional American frame house is based on an exactly comparable method of construction. The new elements were the fireproofing of the component materials, the more exact calculations made possible through the use of steel, and the increased height, which was limited only by the strength of the foundations.

To say this, however, is not to lessen the boldness and inventiveness which characterized the Chicago architects and the steel masters and engineers who aided them; it was one with the spirit that created the grain-elevators, the continental railroad systems, the great bridges, and the steel-works themselves. Root formulated the æsthetic of these new structures. "In them," he said, "should be carried out the ideals of modern business life—simplicity, stability, breadth, dignity. To lavish upon them profusion of delicate ornament is worse than useless, for this would better be preserved for the place and hour of contemplation and repose. Rather should they by their mass and proportion convey in some large elemental sense an idea of the great, stable, conserving forces of modern civilization."

From the point of clarified expression that Root had formulated and demonstrated, there has been no real advance. Buildings like 900 Broadway in New York reached the same level; but every later effort to evade the logic of modern civilization by insincere gestures of respect to the culture, the feelings, the ornamental systems of previous ages, or to simulate their effect by "modern" systems of ornament merely reduces the dignity and sincerity that these older structures achieved. Attempts to make a business building a Cathedral or a Temple deny the order that belongs to the essential function: the Chicago Tribune Tower was miles below the best office-buildings of the eighties in all that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

constitutes æsthetic rightness and good form. Business, and not the fake religion of business, was what the earlier skyscrapers expressed. Their conception can be summed up in a word: the builders *meant business*. Could one give either the architects or their clients higher praise?

The fact is that the architects of the Brown Decades reached an appropriate solution for the office-building more quickly than they knew, or any one could anticipate; this solution had no equivalent in the æsthetic vocabulary of the age; and instead of clinging to it, developing it, bringing out to the last degree the virtues of simplicity and directness, and playing only with the fundamental units of construction, the architects of America, having scaled the heights so quickly, poised for a dizzy moment and then fell—fell into the easy mechanical duplication of other modes of architecture, frigidly predicted by the Chicago Exposition of 1893 . . . turning out a rapid succession of Roman temples and baths, Florentine villas and French palaces and Gothic churches and universities, to say nothing of office-buildings which retained ill-chosen souvenirs from all these crumbled civilizations.

So low had we sunk in the generation after the World's Fair that we habitually characterized as an advance during this period what was actually a serious retrogression. Had Richardson lived, had Root lived another fifteen years, the results would probably have been different: one man can lead, two men of the same mind are an army, and three men directed toward a single objective could probably have conquered the dull and inert forces that stood in their way; at all events they would have made a glorious fight. But in 1891 only one of this early trio was left. His name was Louis Sullivan.

V

Louis Sullivan. The name has become a symbol, and the symbol has been one to conjure with. I approach this man with reverence; for even his enemies have respected the fierce sincerity of his mind and his passionate affirmations of life and art: they have called him the father of the modern skyscraper and they have paid tribute to the originality of his ornament, even when they had no desire to emulate it. Furthermore, while they have properly looked upon Sullivan as the first of the moderns, some of his critics, letting the wish beget the thought, have hailed him at the same time as the last of the moderns, as if by doubling the paradox they could return more quickly to safe ground.

As both an architect and a man, Louis Sullivan is a figure for whom one must make allowances, and correct for both enmities and partialities, before coming to a just estimate; but he remains an important personality, even when full justice has been done. The influence of his example was almost as wide as Richardson's; that of his writings was far more important than Root's. His "Kindergarten Chats" and his "Autobiography of an Idea" will long remain a witness to his spirit. He was wilful, capricious, sometimes grandiloquently mystical; even before poverty and defeat created compensatory needs, his belief in his own unique illuminations kept him from having the most fruitful contact with other men; and his weaknesses were accentuated in the solitude of his last years, spent miserably in a third-rate Chicago hotel, with a few unimportant jobs thrown in his lap through the kindness of despairing friends.

But Sullivan's was perhaps the first mind in American architecture that had come to know itself with any fulness in relation to its soil, its period, its civiliza-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion, and had been able to absorb fully all the many lessons of the century. One might call him the Whitman of American architecture. If his vision outstripped his own accomplishment, it was large enough to outstrip any immediate accomplishment; for it needed for its fulfilment the drive and effort of a whole civilization.

VI

Louis Sullivan was of French-Irish ancestry. He was born in Boston in 1856. After studying at the English High School under a redoubtable master, Moses Woolson, in 1870 he took examinations for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and passed them. Very early in life he had decided upon architecture as a career, and he passed from the Institute to the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, by way of the office of Furness & Hewitt in Philadelphia. Frank Furness was the designer of a bold, unabashed, ugly, and yet somehow healthily pregnant architecture. It was of work such as his that Montgomery Schuyler remarked: "It is more feasible to tame exuberances than to create a soul under the ribs of death. The emancipation of American architecture is thus ultimately more hopeful than if it were put under academic bonds to keep the peace. It may be freely admitted that many of its manifestations are not for the present joyous but grievous."

The panic of 1873 robbed Sullivan of his job and sent him to Chicago; in 1874 he sailed for France, and stayed there almost four years. It was a heady experience for this sensitive young man; and in his autobiography he has given only one aspect of it: the effect of French logic and discipline upon an eager, self-confident American. Sullivan's mathematics was at first inadequate, and he studied it under a French master. This man scanned the mathematical textbook that Sullivan had purchased in advance and said: "Now observe: here is a problem with five exceptions or special cases; here a theorem, three special cases; another nine, and so on and on, a procession of exceptions and special cases. I suggest you place the book in the wastebasket; we shall not need it here; for our demonstrations shall be so broad as to admit of no exceptions!" These words, however they were uttered or repeated, made a deep impression on the young man. Here was the voice of a real teacher, and he had crystallized for Sullivan, in a sentence, the aim of a genuine system of architecture—to arrive at a method so broad as to admit of no exceptions. "If this can be done in mathematics," said Sullivan to himself, "why not in architecture? The instant answer: it can and it shall be!"

Louis Sullivan returned to Chicago, a thriving city, busy, hospitable, building itself out of the wreck of the fire, a brutal network of industrial necessities, railroads, grain-elevators, bridges, stockyards, business offices, brutal and chaotic, but full of an exuberant vitality which, if it made the errors grosser, made its triumphs even more colossal. The pressure of financial interests in the Loop was already creating the gratuitous congestion of the skyscraper; vast railroad-yards swung across the Lake Front in blithe contempt for any other uses than the convenience of iron and wheels; but grappling with this brawling ugliness were men equally powerful, and the architects of the day were not dwarfed by business men, but stood shoulder to shoulder with them, sharing their deficiencies and their strength. In this environment, an idea might be an act.

There were other men, like John Edelman, to share Sullivan's interest in historians of art like Taine, in such poets as Whitman, the Whitman who had said: There is no more need of ro-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mances; let facts and history be properly told. These sentiments took hold of Sullivan. In 1879 he went into the office of Denkmar Adler, and in 1881, at twenty-five, he became Adler's partner. A rapid rise. The world was at his feet. At the age of thirty he began to work on the gargantuan Auditorium Building and Theatre, a work so colossal that it took all of five years to finish. That building, like the Monadnock, stands at the parting of the ways between Richardson's masonry and the lighter, more supple forms of steel construction. Its face is notably devoid of ornament, although the Auditorium itself exhibited the delicate lacy stuff that Sullivan's hand turned out so quickly.

In the World's Fair that followed, it is conceivable that had Root been the master-designer, as was at first projected—he was responsible for the use of a park site with watercourses, and he contemplated the use of color more lavishly than any one had hitherto attempted—it is conceivable that Louis Sullivan would with Root have dominated the situation. The Chicago architects were, however, largely crowded out by the suave classic and Renaissance practitioners whom Burnham brought in, and Sullivan was notable in the Fair only for the Transportation Building, the one structure that departed from precedent in its golden portal.

Up to this time, Sullivan had ridden the crest of the wave. In 1895 Sullivan and Adler parted company. This was to prove a great misfortune; for, unlike Richardson, Sullivan lacked some of the necessary ingredients for architectural mastery; he was at his best with the tactful, practical, painstaking Adler at his side, and, left to himself, his buildings, though often original in conception, began in a subtle way to disintegrate; the masculine and the feminine elements, form and feeling, drew apart; and finally, in the work of his declining years, Sullivan's ornament often ruined the logic of the design.

In the Wainwright Building in St. Louis, Sullivan had emphasized the vertical elements and had shown the skyscraper how to soar; but with due deference to such excellent critics as Mr. Claude Bragdon, I do not believe that this was a fortunate solution; for the steel cage is not in itself a vertical system of building, and Sullivan's emphasis of piers gave the appearance of masonry construction. As for the outward curving at the top, with its foliation of ornament, this differed from the classical cornice only by the difference in the quality of the light and shadow. Root's abandonment of ornament on the Monadnock Building and Sullivan's own treatment of the Auditorium Building were both far sounder in conception.

Ornament, however, was Sullivan's greatest claim to originality, as distinguished from great technical competence: he even weakened the design of the Schlesinger and Meyer department store, where he properly used a horizontal system of windows, and gained a legitimate accent by a rounded glass bay that ran down the corner of the building, by covering the lower two stories with a lacy snowflake grille, which not merely contradicts the structure above, but distracts attention from the exhibition windows themselves. Sullivan's ornament was frequently not related to the forms and materials of the building; it was applied as arbitrarily as acanthus leaves. It was, moreover, drafting-room ornament; although not derived from books and pictures, it was related essentially to the drafting-board; and it did nothing for the painter or the sculptor—indeed, it did not leave him a quiet space, that quiet space we now find so welcome even when we have no desire to call in the original artist.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In his old age Sullivan was reduced to designing little country banks in the Middle West; they are scattered all over mid-America from Columbus, Wis., to Sydney, Ohio. Mr. Sinclair Lewis's portrait of Gopher Prairie, veracious though it may be, did something less than justice to the many little country towns that generously atoned for the neglect of the master in the big metropolises by giving him a series of such commissions. For Sullivan, even when he was farthest from his own ideal, that of an architecture so broad as to admit of no exceptions, was still head and shoulders above most of the men around him: his attack on the elements of his problem was still bold and frontal; and it was only in his inability to work with others, his moody withdrawal into himself, his tendency to take refuge in ornament as a grateful intoxicant, and in intoxicants as a last distracting ornament on the bare walls of reality, it was by these lapses that he brought upon himself some of the misfortunes which were due as much to the uncompromising strength of his talent as to his shortcomings. The best of his bank buildings, so far as one may judge from photographs alone, is his Land and Loan Office in Algona, Iowa; that in Grinnell, Iowa, is only a little less satisfactory; and perhaps the lowest point of his disintegration was the Home Building Association in Newark, N. J. The letter of Sullivan's teaching was carried on by his one-time assistant, G. G. Elmslie, in the Capitol and Loan Association Building in Topeka, and the Court-House in Sioux City; but it is not by the letter, nor by his actual monuments, that Sullivan will best go down to posterity.

VII

What, then, was Sullivan's contribution? Sullivan was the first American architect consciously to think of his relations with civilization. Richardson and Root had both had good intuitions, and they had made effective demonstrations; but Sullivan knew what he was about, and, what is more important, he knew what he ought to be about. "Once you learn," he said, "to look upon architecture not merely as an art more or less well or more or less badly done, but as a *social manifestation,* the critical eye becomes clairvoyant, and obscure, unnoted phenomena become illumined." Sullivan had this sense of the forces at work in society, in industry, in the human personality. He "found himself drifting into the engineering point of view, or state of mind, as he began to discern that the engineers were the only men who could face a problem squarely; who knew a problem when they saw it. Their minds were trained to deal with real things, as far as they knew them, as far as they could ascertain them, while the architectural mind lacked this directness, this simplicity, this singleness of purpose—it had no standard of reference, no bench-mark one might say."

Sullivan saw that the business of the architect was to organize the forces of modern society, discipline them for humane ends, express them in the plastic-utilitarian form of building. To achieve this purpose, the architect must abandon the tedious and unmeaning symbolism of older cultural forms: a modern building could no more wear the dress of the classic than the architect could wear a peruke and sword. The whole problem of building, Sullivan saw, must be thought out afresh, and the solution must be of such a nature that it would apply to every manner of structure, from the home to the factory, from the office to the tomb: no activity was too mean to escape the ministrations of the architect. While Sullivan manfully faced the problem of the tall building, he saw that the spirit that produced such congestion

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was "profoundly antisocial . . . these buildings are not architecture but outlawry, and their authors criminals in the true sense of the word." So, though Sullivan respected the positive forces of his age, democracy, science, industry, he was not a go-getter, and he refused to accept an architecture which showed a "cynical contempt for all those qualities that real humans value."

Sullivan's own relative failure in carrying out his conceptions does not vitiate them. In his final years, his thought sometimes became misty and vague; there are passages in "The Autobiography of an Idea" in which an eloquent and obsessive rhetoric conceals a certain emptiness, in which a platitude is put forward with a fanfare of emphatic trumpets, like a puppet king, waving a sceptre. But Sullivan was not simply a creature of his environment: he had absorbed the classic discipline of French thought, he had lived with Michelet, Whitman, Taine, Darwin, and this fusion of the romantic, scientific, and classical impulses in the man gave him a power to react upon his environment that neither Richardson, the pure romantic, nor Roebling, the scientific engineer, nor McKim, the pure classicist, possessed. Breaking loose from Richardson, Sullivan made a real beginning. On Richardson's foundations he laid the first corner-stone of the new architecture.

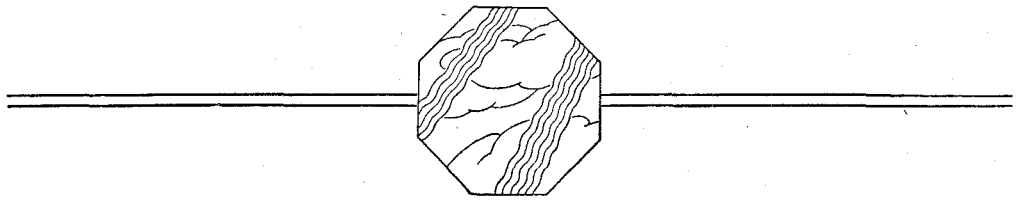
If one must value Sullivan even more as an influence than as an architect, this does not in itself diminish the value of the man. Sullivan's part in the education of Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright, who came to his office just as the plans for the Auditorium Building were being completed, would alone justify the teaching of the master. Sullivan was the link between two greater masters, Richardson and Wright; and with the development of Wright's architecture the last stage in the transition was made: modern architecture was born. From that point on, the work of the Chicago school entered into the general stream of a world movement. In Wright, Sullivan's best ideas found actual expression more convincingly than in his own work.

VIII

The movement begun by Richardson in the late seventies, carried through first by Root and Sullivan, then by Wright, helped in subordinate ways by men like Irving Pond and Ernest Wilby and Irving Gill, carried into our own generation by younger men like Barry Byrne and Chester MacArthur, worked against the main currents of American life between 1890 and 1925; and it is only now belatedly coming into its own. The promise of the Brown Decades was betrayed, not fulfilled, by the World's Fair of 1893; for that was the prelude to an opulent but essentially weak classic revival which dwindled in time into an unconvincing eclecticism.

Now that we are taking up the thread again at the point where the "successful" architects of the nineties timidly left it, we can see how much we owe to the healthy and aggressive energies of the seventies and eighties—and how true the promise of those decades was. These men conceived the beginnings of modern form. One may say of the architects of the Brown Decades that their worst failures were very near to success; while of the recessive and conventional minds that followed them one may say equally that their most palpable successes, their Pennsylvania Stations, their Woolworth Buildings, were from the beginning failures—failures of spirit, failures of the creative imagination. In sum, the Brown Decades mean as much for our architecture as the Golden Day means for our literature.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Dorothy

By ERSKINE CALDWELL

A story of two birds of passage

WHEN I saw her for the first time she was staring several hundred miles away. She was standing on the other side of the street near the corner holding a folded newspaper in front of her. It had been folded until the want ads. were the only print showing, and it looked like a paper printed without head-lines. Suddenly she blinked her eyes several times and looked at the paper she was holding. Her knees and legs were rigidly stiff but her body swayed backward and forward like some one weak from hunger. Her shoulders dropped downward and downward until they seemed to be merely the upper part of her arms.

She glanced at the ads. every few moments and then searched half-heartedly for a number on one of the doors behind her. Once she opened her pocketbook and read something written on the back of an envelope. There were numbers on most of the doors, but either she could not see the numerals plainly enough or she could not find the one she was looking for—I didn't know what the trouble was. I couldn't see her face. Her head had dropped forward, and her chin sank to the collar of her waist. She would look up for a moment and then her head would suddenly drop downward again and hang there until she could raise it. She looked like a young mother weeping over the body of her child.

She was standing across the street within reach of one of the whiteway poles. She could have leaned against the pole or else found a place to sit down. I don't know why she did neither. I don't suppose she knew herself.

I was standing on the shady side of the street waiting for something. I didn't know what I was waiting for. It wasn't important, anyway. I didn't have anything to do, and I wasn't going anywhere. I was just standing there when I looked across the street and saw her with the folded paper in her hands. There were hundreds of other people in the street, all of them hurrying somewhere. She and I were the only ones standing still.

It was between one and two o'clock in the afternoon. Men and women were coming out of the restaurants on both sides of the street, hurrying back to work. I had a quarter in my pocket but I had not eaten any lunch. I was hungry but I was saving it. I wanted to get up to Richmond, where I was sure I could find a job. Things were quiet in New Orleans, and I had tried Atlanta. Now I wanted to get up to Richmond. It was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

July, and there were not many jobs anywhere. I had always been lucky in Richmond, though.

The girl on the other side of the street turned the paper over and read down another column of the close print. There were several office-buildings and a few banks on the street. Everywhere else were retail stores of some kind. Most of them had displays of women's wear in the windows. It was hard for a man to find a job, and not much easier for a woman. Especially a girl, unless she was wearing the right kind of clothes.

The girl put the newspaper under her arm and started across the street. I was standing a few steps from the corner. She came across, holding the paper tightly under her arm and looking down at the pavement all the time. When she reached the curb, she came down the street in my direction. She still did not look up. She held her head down all the time as if she were looking at her slippers.

The pavement was hot. It was July.

She walked past me, behind. I could hear the gritty sand and dust grind under her shoes. It made a sound like the sandpapering of an iron pipe. Then suddenly the sound stopped. I looked around and saw her standing almost beside me. She was so close I could have touched her with my hand. Her face was pale and her lips were whiter than her forehead. When she looked up at me she did not raise her head, only her eyes saw me. Her eyes were damp. They were very blue. She did not want me to know that she had been crying.

I turned all the way around and looked at her. I did not know what to do. Until she spoke to me she held her mouth tight against her teeth, but she could not stop her lips from quivering.

"Can you tell me where No. 67 Forsythe Street is?" she asked me.

I looked down at her. Her hands were clinched so tightly I could see only the backs of her fingers. They were stained as if she had been handling freshly printed newspapers all day. They were not dirty. They were just not clean. A sort of blackish dust had settled on the backs of her hands. Dust is in the air of every city, and some people wash their hands five or six times a day to keep them clean. I don't know, but maybe she had not had a chance to wash her hands for several days. Her face was not soiled, but it looked as if she had tried to keep it clean with a dampened handkerchief and a powdered chamois skin.

She had asked me where No. 67 Forsythe Street was. She had said, "Pardon me," when she asked me. I knew she would say, "Thank you very much," when I told her where the address was.

I had to swallow hard before I could say anything at all. I knew where the number was. It was an employment agency. I had been there myself two or three times a day all that week. But there were no jobs there for anybody. It was July. I could look across the street and see the number in large gilt numerals on the door. The door was being constantly opened and closed by people going in and coming out again.

"What?" I asked her. It didn't sound like that, though, when I said it. When you talk to a girl who is very beautiful, you say things differently.

I knew what she said but I could not remember hearing her say it. I had been looking at her so long I forgot the question she asked.

She opened her pocketbook and put her hand inside, feeling for the envelope on which she had written the address. Her eyes were staring at me with the same far-away vagueness they had when I saw her for the first time on the other side of the street. She searched for the envelope without once looking at what she was doing. It had fallen to the pave-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment the moment she unclasped the pocketbook.

I picked up the letter. It was addressed to Dorothy—I couldn't read the last name. It had been sent in care of general delivery at the main post-office from some little town down near the Florida border. It might have been from her mother or sister. It was a woman's handwriting. She jerked it from me before I could hand it to her. There was something in the way she reached for it that made me wonder about it. Maybe her father had died and she was trying to find a job so she could support her mother—I don't know. Things like that happen all the time. Or all of her family could have been killed in an accident and she had to leave home to make a living—things like that happen everywhere.

People were turning around to look at us. They walked past us and then turned around and stared. Peachtree Street was only around the corner from where we stood. It was a fashionable section.

I don't know what made me say what I did. I knew where No. 67 Forsythe Street was. I had been there myself only half an hour before. It was an employment agency. They said come in again to-morrow morning. They told everybody the same thing—both men and women. It was the dull season. It was July.

I said, "No. 67 is about three blocks down the street, on the other side of the viaduct." I pointed down there, my arm over her head. She was very small beside me.

She looked down the street to the other side of the viaduct. There were half a dozen cheap hotels down there. They were the cheapest kind. Everybody has seen them. A lot of us know what they are like inside. There are some in every city. They charge seventy-five cents and up. . . . I thought I was doing right. There was no money in her pocketbook. Not a cent. I saw everything she had in it. I had a quarter, and I would have to go all the way to Richmond before I found a job. There were no jobs across the street at No. 67. It was the dull season. Everybody was out of town for the summer. There were no jobs in July. And she was hungry. She had been trying to sleep in railroad-stations at night, too. . . . On the other side of the viaduct there were at least seven or eight hotels. The cheap kind. I had seen women in them, running down the corridors in kimonos after midnight. They always had some money, enough to buy something to eat when they were hungry. I know what it is to be hungry. A man can stand it for a while—a week, ten days, two weeks—but a woman—if you have ever seen the body of a starving woman you'll know why I thought I was doing right.

She had not moved.

"It's about three blocks down the street, on the other side of the viaduct," I told her again. She knew what I said the first time.

She did not move.

She was standing there, looking at the dirty red brick buildings. She knew the kind they were. Some of them had signs that could be read across the viaduct. *Hotel*—75c & $1. She was reading the signs. My hand was in my pocket holding the quarter between the fingers. I don't know what she could have done with the money. I was ashamed to give it to her—it was only a quarter.

"All right," she said.

It was as if she was making up her mind about something of great importance, like a decision of life and death. It was as if she had said, "All right, I'll go." She was not thanking me for telling her where she could find the number. She knew No. 67 was on this side of the viaduct.

"All right," she said.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She turned and walked down the street toward the dirty red brick hotels. The heels of her slippers had worn sideways. She tried to stand erectly on her feet and she had to walk stiffly so her ankles would not turn. If her legs had relaxed for a second she would have sprained her ankles.

She did not look back at me. Her blue flannel skirt was wrinkled far out of shape. It looked as if she had slept in it for several nights, maybe a week. It was covered with specks of dust and lint. Her white silk waist was creased and discolored. The dust had lodged in the folds and the creases made horizontal smudges across her shoulders. Her hat looked as if it had been in a hard rain for several hours and then dried on a sharp peg of some kind. There was a peak in the crown that drew the whole hat out of shape.

I couldn't stand there any longer. She had gone almost a block toward the dirty red brick buildings. I crossed over and ran down an alley toward Alabama Street. At the end of the alley I found a drain sewer. I dropped the quarter in it. I didn't want the money in my pocket.

I went to a garage on Alabama Street. A mechanic had told me there was a good chance of getting a ride to Richmond if I would stay there long enough and wait until a car came along that was going through.

When I got to the garage, there was a car inside being greased. The man in the garage nodded at me and pointed toward the automobile. It was a big car. I knew it wouldn't take long to make the trip in a car like that. I asked the man who was driving it if he would take me to Richmond with him. He asked the man in the garage about me. They talked awhile in the office and then he came out and said he would take me up with him. He was leaving right away.

We drove up to Richmond. I started out to find a job somewhere. There's a wholesale district under the elevated railway-tracks between the State Capitol and the river. I had been there before.

But there was something the matter with me. I didn't have the patience to look up a job. I was nervous. I had to keep moving all the time. I couldn't stand still.

A few days later I was in Baltimore. I applied for a job in an employment agency. They had plenty of jobs but they took their time about giving them out. They wanted you to wait a week or two to see if you would stick. Most everybody went on to Philadelphia. That's the way it is in summer. Everybody goes up. When the weather begins to get cold they come down again, stopping in Baltimore until the weather catches up, and then they move to the next city. Everybody ends up in New Orleans.

I couldn't stay. I couldn't stand still. I went on up to Philadelphia like everybody else. From Philadelphia you move up into Jersey. But I didn't. I stayed in Philadelphia.

Then one day I was standing on Market Street, near the city hall, watching a new skyscraper go up. I saw a woman on the other side of the street who looked like the girl I had seen in Atlanta. She was not the same one, of course. But there was a resemblance.

I could not think about anything else. I stood there all the afternoon thinking about the girl in Atlanta and wondering what I could do. I knew I had to figure out some way to get to Atlanta and find her. I had sent her down Forsythe Street, across the viaduct. She knew where she was going, but she would not have gone if it had not been for me. I sent her down there. . . . God, if I had only pointed across the street to No. 67! She knew where it was. She had been standing in front of it when I first saw

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her with the newspaper folded back at the want ads. But she knew it would have been useless to go inside. They would have told her to come in again the next morning. That's what they told everybody. Maybe she thought I would give her some money. I don't know what she thought, to tell the truth. But she was up against it, just as I was. She was too proud to ask for money to buy something to eat, and yet she thought I might give her some. I had a quarter, but I was ashamed to offer it to her after I sent her down the street toward those hotels. She had tried to find a job somewhere so she could have something to eat and a place to sleep. She knew there was always one way. She knew about Forsythe Street on the other side of the viaduct. Somebody had told her about it. A woman in one of the railroad-stations, perhaps. Somebody told her, because she knew all about it.

I didn't send her there, she would have gone anyway. . . . That's what I think sometimes—but it's a lie! I told her to go down the street and cross the viaduct.

The Unwanted

By Dorothy Collins Alyea

As I was going by Tammas' house
I heard the fiddles and flutes begin.
I stood by the window a long, long time,
But nobody asked me in,
—within,
Nobody asked me in.

As I was going by Philip's door
I saw the tables with food and wine.
I leaned my hand on the garden-gate,
But nobody said, "Come, dine,
—do dine,"
Nobody said, "Come, dine."

I went my way until I was tired,
And sat and rested upon the stile.
There were merry maids on the orchard path,
But none of them gave me a smile,
a smile,
Though I had wanted to smile.

Away and away and away I went,
And whistled and whistled my heart to cheer,
Till suddenly some one was calling me,
And somebody said, "My dear—"
oh, dear!
Somebody called me dear.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Soviet Union Looks for Gold

By WILLIAM C. WHITE

Valuta — foreign gold — is the crying necessity of Soviet Russia. The need for it is behind the so-called "dumping" of wheat and other products upon the world market. The intricate juggling of currency and the present Soviet money system with its one-way exchange and its money bootleggers is narrated with amusing human incidents in the same clear style which distinguishes the author's recent book "These Russians."

THEY tell in Moscow of a man who came to the Secret Police with a dog for whom he claimed remarkable powers. "He can smell out *valuta*—foreign currency," said the owner. The police were sceptical, but agreed to give the dog a trial and led him down the street. Stopping suddenly, he seized a man who was passing and shook him. The police on investigation found that the stranger's pockets were filled with dollar bills. On a second trial the dog barred the way to a passerby; on examination it was found that his pockets were stuffed with German marks. Almost convinced, the police tried the dog once more. This time, on passing a man, he suddenly rolled over in the gutter, sick. The man, when examined, had a pocket full of Soviet rubles.

The moral lies not in the story but in the gusto with which I have heard former merchants and private traders repeat it.

The ruble, valued at slightly more than two to a dollar, depreciated rapidly during the war. By the time of the first revolution, in February, 1917, it was worth less than half its par value. Depreciation continued throughout the year; when the Bolsheviki seized power, in November, it was worth slightly less than five cents.

The financial policy of the Bolsheviki was aimed first to destroy capitalism in the cities just as completely as peasant mobs were uprooting it in the villages. Banks were nationalized; at the same time notices in the newspapers ordered the owners of safe-deposit boxes to report and have their boxes opened and examined. Those notices were only courtesy; the contents were confiscated whether they reported or not. All gold was declared the monopoly of the government. All Tsarist and Kerensky government bonds were annulled, and, likewise, a little later, shares in manufacturing undertakings. These measures were aimed to get out of the hands of the bourgeoisie their most dangerous weapon—money. Sudden levies and extraordinary taxes were applied to seize money. Soviet archives are full of reports from localities: "The capitalists do not desire to pay contributions put on them. A few have already been put in jail. If they will

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not pay from cash on hand, all their property will be confiscated; if they do not pay then, other measures, including even shooting, will be used." One county Soviet moaned, "The Soviet has no money . . . because there are practically no capitalists in the district."

But a weapon far more effective was the emission of currency. No attempt was made to check inflation. Money poured from the printing-presses which, temporarily at least, helped to provide the government with an income and, indirectly, destroyed the strength of those secret savings, so carefully concealed from the tax collectors, which might have bought privileges or provided bribes. The money power of the bourgeoisie was ruined at the root but, with depreciation slowly moving on its way to infinity, tax collections in money became worthless, while a civil war had to be financed. Supplies of consumable goods in the cities had disappeared or were being carefully hoarded; there were supplies in the villages and brigades were sent out to take them by force. Money, such as it was, played an increasingly diminishing rôle in the new Soviet economy. Workers received only rations and free tickets—for railroads, trams, and even to the theatres. The individual could forget his hunger for food by soothing his soul with arias sung by Chaliapin. The central government decreed: "Bookkeepers shall not use money figures in counting receipts and disbursements of products." There were plans to measure goods in "labor units."

But the crisis of 1921, the insurrections in the villages, tired of forced grain collections, and all the other factors that led to the introduction of the New Economic system, which permitted private trade to some extent, forced the revival of a money system. *Sovznaki,* paper bills, were still being issued to "balance" the budget, but trade had passed largely over to a barter basis. Private trade, however, could not be carried on without some form of money. In addition, rebuilding plans were now arranged and there had to be taxes to pay for them. Some scheme of internal credits had to be arranged; it was difficult to borrow and pay interest with eggs, grain, and butter. A State Bank, founded in 1921, tried to control depreciation, but some firmer money unit was needed for government firms to work with—let alone private trade—before any economic reconstruction could take place.

Loans were raised in the country, payable in flour and sugar; the "buyers" of these bonds were then taxed—and were graciously permitted to pay the assessment with the bonds. A lottery loan was sold by force. The budget showed some progress toward balancing, but firm currency was a necessity.

In 1922 the State Bank began to "issue," for its own credit uses, a note, the *chervonyetz,* in units of ten Tsarist rubles. It was to be held at par by valuta —backing twenty-five per cent of the amount issued with gold or with *stable foreign currency.* It could not be exchanged for the earlier paper notes—and no one wanted to. The number issued was gauged very carefully in relation to the trade turnover in the country. The *chervontsi* served at first to measure prices as goods began to appear on the market; eventually they entered actively into large and small business, but chiefly in the cities. The budget deficit, made up by currency issues, was eighty per cent in 1921; by 1923 it was down to twenty per cent.

But there was still a very difficult problem to solve. The situation in which the dying "paper" money and the *chervontsi* existed side by side could not long endure. As fast as the good currency appeared it disappeared into secret savings funds. The paper notes lost even nomi-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nal value and again the villages were bound toward a barter system. A money famine was imminent; and there was potential chaos in the contradiction of cities trading on a *chervonyetz* basis and the villages trying somehow to trade with the old paper. Therefore, in 1924, no more paper notes were issued. In their place the government (and not the bank, in order to protect its capital in case of unexpected inflation) issued one, three, and five ruble notes, as fractions of the *chervonyetz,* interchangeable with them, and having behind them the same twenty-five per cent backing.

There was some immediate inflation, for even these notes had to be used to close the decreasing budget deficit. Eventually the solid currency conquered; the paper notes became wall-paper. Price readjustments followed and the Soviet Union, eight years after the revolution, had a solid currency system, supported by a reserve of gold and valuta. The fight to secure it and the hardships wrought by speculation and price changes, made it a drama of economics. Without that series of financial reforms there could have been no Five-Year Plan. With their introduction there was a quick return to all the accompaniments of a money system—internal credit, loans, savings-banks, wage scales, and insurance companies. The Moscow newspapers now quote daily foreign exchange prices although rubles are never quoted officially anywhere outside Soviet Russia; the dollar, in the Moscow quotations, varies only a fraction from 1.9434 rubles. On paper the Soviet currency is as stable as our own.

II

Although a Soviet economist states, "Our money is gold money, since exchange for gold or foreign valuta is done on the basis of a firm exchange," the Soviet monetary system has some curious concomitants. There is irony in the use of the word "exchange," for that exchange is, like almost everything economic in the Soviet Union, a monopoly of the Soviet Government; it is a one-way affair, the only exchange permitted Russian citizens being the sale of valuta for rubles; there are no customers. Furthermore, rubles are not permitted, except in one instance, to leave the country or to enter it. Every voyager into the Soviet Union meets one question at the custom-house: "Have you any Soviet money with you?" Smuggling Soviet money into Soviet Russia is a crime for which confiscation is the lightest sentence. It is a serious and dangerous business.

Every foreigner entering the Soviet Union must likewise declare how much foreign currency he has with him, no matter what form it may be in. Every departing traveller leaves behind all Soviet money before crossing the border. Customs guards usually examine baggage very cursorily; they are far more interested in the contents of pocket-books and money-belts.

Foreigners soon find how the word "exchange" is applied; they may exchange dollars, pounds, marks, latts, kronen, or zlotys at the State Bank for rubles, at par. But to change back surplus rubles into valuta requires more patience, tact, and, finally, profanity, than the average tourist possesses. An American correspondent, called suddenly to Paris, spent nine hours one day running from bank to Finance Ministry trying to secure permission to change back four hundred rubles, although he had received by cable and changed into rubles (the bank always changes cable remittances in dollars to rubles) more than a thousand dollars during the previous six weeks. The daily expenses of a tourist in the Soviet Union are figured closely and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he may not change back more rubles for dollars than the sum he brought in, minus his daily "expenditure." American engineers working on Soviet contracts always receive part of their salary in rubles—which they must spend in Russia—and the balance in dollars in a New York bank.

Even so, foreigners occupy a privileged position; the Russian who seeks to change rubles for valuta meets only the stony refusal of a bank teller. Those in government service who are "commandeered" abroad do receive limited amounts of foreign currency; and professors are allowed five dollars a month with which they may purchase foreign literature. But those Russians (and there are far more than one would imagine) who used to support émigré relatives now find it impossible to send remittances. "Why should we allow our valuta to be sent out to keep scoundrelly runaways?" newspapers asked when the ban was first applied. "Exchange for gold or foreign valuta is done on the basis of a firm exchange"—but only for those to whom the government grants permission.

There are other companion curiosities. Moscow has the only government-owned stores in the world which will not accept their own government currency for purchases; these stores sell things antiquarian, works of art, and articles most likely to appeal to the bourgeois tourist with his valuta; any one who wishes to buy the Tsar's silver shaving-mug (judging from the number on sale in Moscow stores, he, for a bearded man, had an amazingly large collection) must pay for it in *dollari*. Such a store is the first Soviet institution (except the guards asking, "Have you any Soviet rubles?") which the tourist meets at the landing pier in Leningrad.

But the most unusual accompaniments to the Soviet monetary system are those institutions which pay no attention whatever to the official exchange rates as quoted in the Moscow papers. There are individuals in Moscow, the members of the "Black Bourse," who will buy valuta, not at two rubles for the dollar, but at eight and ten rubles. It is a precarious occupation, leading to serious trouble for both buyer and seller, and such speculation has brought even death sentences; yet there is a demand for valuta for hoarding purposes. Why save rubles? Once before they turned from wealth to waste. One dollar or four marks are better to save than ten rubles; the amount of valuta hidden away in the Soviet Union must have cost the bourgeois governments a small fortune to print. Occasionally the Secret Police turn up a hidden store and confiscate it; if that is all they do the owner is lucky. There was an American named Lee, from Georgia, who bought trinkets in one Russian village, paying for them with *dollari;* the peasants hoarded them, but were eventually found out. Not only were the *dollari* confiscated, but even worse punishment was meted out when the bank announced that they were Confederate dollars.

More important are the dozens of little money-changing shops in Berlin, Warsaw, and Riga, which will exchange rubles for valuta at rates implying complete ignorance of the Bolshevik boast: "Our money is gold money." In 1927 their rates were roughly three rubles to the dollar; in those days such rubles could be imported legally into the Soviet Union, and one German concessionaire made extra profit by importing an amount sufficient for his entire factory payroll weekly. Since January, 1928, all importation and exportation of Soviet currency has been forbidden. The ruble quotations in these bourgeois cities have fallen steadily from three to five, seven, and now eight rubles to the dol-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lar—the buyer taking the risk of smuggling them across the border.

In spite of prohibitions on the export of rubles these foreign shops can and will supply any requested amounts; hundred-ruble notes bring a slightly higher premium than those of ten rubles. Such rubles get abroad in various ways; they are smuggled out by Russians going abroad and sold for any amount of valuta that can be obtained. There is considerable smuggling of cloth, shoes, tobacco, and other goods across the Polish, the Persian, and, particularly, the Manchurian borders; a year ago the best English woollens and genuine English cigarettes could be ordered secretly in Askhabad, near the Persian border, and delivery would follow in several weeks. In such smuggling operations those at the foreign end charge five times the normal price for their goods, take their pay in rubles, and sell the rubles abroad to speculators for one-fifth of their nominal value. The smugglers do not lose; neither do the speculators, for they can sell the rubles for a return journey to Soviet Russia at one-fourth of their par value.

Against such smugglers the Secret Police, troops which are the Soviet border guards, move with finesse and finality; but the trade thrives, at least on the Manchurian borders if not elsewhere, and Soviet currency collects in Harbin. The dealers in Europe felt an unexpected shortage of supply when the fight between the Soviet and the Manchurian Governments broke out in July, 1929. One speculator in Berlin explained the shortage by saying: "You see, much of our supply comes from Harbin and is shipped to us in registered post *across the Soviet Union* to Berlin. Now the rail connection is broken." Constantinople is likewise a collection point; several of the Near Eastern countries have trade agreements of long standing with the Soviet Government permitting their nationals to enter Soviet Russia with their goods, usually dried fruits, and to export their profits in rubles; by arranging the prices to fit the depreciation of the ruble abroad the merchants cannot lose. And more rubles pass on to Berlin.

Naturally, the Soviet Government fights the importation of such rubles. They are on the alert to prevent any émigrés abroad from counterfeiting Soviet currency, smuggling it into the country, and thus hitting at the root of the fiscal system; that, certain enterprising Georgians tried to do in Germany a year ago. (The dealers in rubles abroad are now thoughtful enough to give a written guarantee of the authenticity of every *chervonyetz* sold!) Demanding payment for works of art and things antiquarian in dollars is one offshoot of the government defense. But the importation is not entirely stopped, as one sensational trial last autumn showed; it shows also what profits can be made in the speculation and a bit of the rôle that diplomatic pouches can play in helping to avoid the border examination.

A group of speculators in Riga advertised "Money forwarded to Soviet Russia." When any customers appeared they were told that the recipients would not be paid two rubles for a dollar, as would be the case if the banks handled the transaction, but three! The result was a steadily increasing number of customers. The speculators, with the valuta paid in, purchased rubles at Riga prices—six and seven to the dollar. These they gave to a courier of one of the legations stationed in Moscow. Receiving a percentage for his trouble, he carried them each week past the customs guards to Moscow in his sealed diplomatic pouch. In Moscow a stenographer in the legation, a Russian citizen, sent out the remittances at the agreed-upon rate every Monday morning.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The surplus of rubles, after the remittances had been paid, was the profit. Members of the "corporation" in Moscow took these rubles and bought diamonds, which the same courier carried back to Riga. These were sold, for valuta of course, at a profit. Thus it was a two-way system and was unbeatable for several years—until the Soviet authorities, which keep a close watch on embassies anyway, noticed the strange custom of this stenographer in sending a dozen money-orders from each of a dozen post-offices every Monday morning.

With this woman as the leading thread, the whole network was pulled into court. The trial was held publicly and given as much publicity as possible as an example for others who might try to smuggle Soviet currency back into Soviet Russia. It was the first serious catch that had been made. Among the prisoners were numerous recipients of remittances; they were freed as being innocent of the whole affair. But of those who remained seven were sentenced to "the highest measure of social defense," death by shooting; and the stenographer received a sentence unusual even in Soviet courts. She had a child of three; she herself was sent to jail for several years and "deprived of maternal rights for life; having thus shown herself an anti-social being," the child went to an orphanage.

III

The foreigner who examines the Soviet monetary system is quickly confused. There seem to be three sets of exchange quotations—those used in Soviet institutions in preparing any fiscal reports which deal with foreign exchange, those on the "Black Bourse," and those of the money-changers in Berlin. It is natural, therefore, to suppose that currency inflation is responsible for the wide divergence between the official and the unofficial quotations. Yet Soviet economists, while admitting the existence of some currency inflation during the past few years, vigorously deny that the Berlin prices are a true index to inflation—that economic disease as much feared in Soviet as in capitalistic economy. Prices, in the closely controlled Soviet economic system, are little or no clew to inflation, for the government can raise or lower them arbitrarily in some lines; and index figures on the cost of living, always a clew to inflation, show in the Soviet Union only a very slight rise, in no way reflecting the disparity between Moscow and Berlin ruble quotations. The Soviet currency, say the Soviet economists, is secured by gold and valuta deposits and by the "assets" of the government; no government has greater assets than the Soviet Government, which can count its factories, railroads, mills, mines, and forests as assets, albeit not liquid. Naturally, Soviet currency emissions increase; but, at the same time, the emissions develop these assets and increase their value. Soviet budgets balance in all official reports, although internal loans play a large part in helping them to do so. The problem of the existence and the amount of inflation in Soviet economy is rather for a trained economist who has ten years of free time for research. He will likewise need infinite patience and advanced training in statistics.

It is easier to describe and to explain the interest of the Soviet Government in amassing valuta, in developing every possible source of foreign exchange; this interest manifests itself in things great—in developing wheat production and export, and in things small—in arresting those hotel porters who obligingly cashed *dollari* for tourists but kept them for themselves, paying the cashier in rubles.

The connections between foreign

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trade, rubles, and valuta are complex but basic. The government has a complete monopoly over foreign trade and carefully arranges an annual schedule of Soviet purchases and sales abroad. Only government organizations may trade abroad and these must adhere closely to the arranged schedule. Through its monopolistic control the government sees that no more is purchased abroad than can be paid for with available exports: and it guards against the importation of luxury goods.

The foreign-trade monopoly of the Soviet Government holds its ruble currency at par and is closely connected with the control of its currency. If the monopoly of foreign trade were removed and any individual was permitted to buy and sell abroad, the ruble would soon depreciate as the gold reserve behind it was drawn abroad to pay for purchases. The internal demand for foreign goods in Soviet Russia is far greater than the supply of goods to pay for that demand, unless there be a government control to arrange that purchases abroad equal sales abroad. There is that control—in the government monopoly of Soviet foreign trade. Without that control, and with a system permitting private participation in foreign trade, the Soviet trade balance would soon be an "unfavorable balance of trade."

A country can pay for imports, as every study of elementary economics shows, only with gold shipments, services rendered (to tourists, for example), or by exports. No one in the Communist Party visualized, in those torrid days of 1917, that the Communist Party would have to go forward to rebuilding Russia and to paying all expenses for that rebuilding from Russian resources alone. There were hopes for foreign loans which did not materialize; the wholehearted annulment of foreign loans in 1917 was a barrier to new investments. Yet old Russia herself had been unable to develop without great foreign investments. What could the Bolsheviki do, in their absence? They turned to the idea of concessions—foreign capitalists should be invited or attracted into the Soviet Union to build industrial plants; these the foreigners could operate for limited periods and then retire, selling them to the Soviet Government. There were few who were willing to accept the Soviet proposition; a large proportion of the concessions that were taken were for the right to fish in Soviet waters, which did not net the Soviet Union one fishing smack, let alone any industrial plants.

Concessions reached their maximum figure in 1928, with only ninety-one, a figure which has fallen now to fifty. Few big firms were interested and very little foreign capital has been invested at any time in Soviet Russia; the total amount never equalled more than one per cent of the total capitalization of Soviet industry. The question of valuta itself acted as a barrier to new concessions; granted that factories in the Soviet Union could run at a profit, that profit would be in rubles. How could the concessionaires get those profits abroad? If all concessions were as successful as one small American concession which, with a capitalization of only several hundred thousand dollars, made a gross profit of more than a million and a half rubles in one year, the foreign exchange resources of the Soviet Government would be drained when concessionaires changed back their ruble profits for valuta. It was suggested that the owners of concessions use their ruble profits to get out or to buy raw material in Soviet Russia and that this be shipped abroad; but the complications of managing a manufacturing and exporting concession at the same time were too great.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In 1926, if not earlier, it was clear that if the agricultural Soviet nation was to be changed into a self-sufficient industrial country, that transition would have to be financed with capital raised at home. The first step toward giving Soviet Russia the mills, the mines, and the electro-stations of modern industry was a plan for the construction of an increasing number of such units between 1928 and 1933, the Five-Year Plan. Other plans and larger numbers of industrial units would follow after that.

No matter what hardships might be encountered in fulfilling the plan, the Soviet Union had one advantage: it started from scratch. It was not a question of refitting old plants, but, in most cases, of building and equipping entirely new units with the most modern machinery and of using the most advanced technical ability in designing and planning the progressive industrialization of Soviet Russia. But machinery and technical skill must be purchased and paid for abroad. The Five-Year Plan would require far greater amounts of foreign exchange secured through exports than could be supplied under normal conditions. The history of the Soviet Union since 1928 is the search for means of paying for the things necessary for Soviet industrialization, the hunt for ways to increase exports, the search for valuta.

The chief export of Russia before the war was grain; if Soviet Russia could export the same amount of grain as did Tsarist Russia her Five-Year Plan could be financed with little trouble. But the division of the large estates into small peasant holdings destroyed the chief sources of the grain surplus. Small peasant holdings could produce only a small percentage of the harvests which larger scale methods had produced. Worse, whenever the peasantry became dissatisfied at the methods of Soviet Government grain collectors, they resorted to the use of their one weapon—decreased sowings; everything combined to lower the amount of harvests.

Consequently, a new village structure had to be included as one of the objectives of the Five-Year Plan, a new village organization which would and could assure the government of increased harvests. The collective system of agriculture, with no privately owned land divided into little strips to be plowed by peasant and horse, or, lacking a horse, peasant and wife, was to be grafted from above on to the village. All the land would be pooled in these collectives and farmed with tractors and other modern agricultural machinery. To equip these collectives with foreign machinery is a task which likewise requires valuta; but the government feels that collectivization will, by 1932, embrace the whole country and assure the government an increasing harvest. Now, at the beginning of the third year of the Five-Year Plan, individual peasant holdings still supply the greater part of the harvest; and to get any important grain surplus for export requires severe rationing measures in the cities and villages. Another form of new agricultural organization is the government farm, "the wheat factory," run with typical factory methods —machinery, set hours of labor, and wages.

Lacking sufficient grain, the Soviet Government has turned to other items for export; there are great attempts to increase the exports of timber, oil, furs, animal casing, magnesium, and other products that have a ready sale abroad. In addition to artificial surpluses of food stuffs created by severely rationing the population, manufactured goods, including almost everything from shoes and cloth to needles, are rationed to furnish an exportable surplus. Try to buy a spool of thread in Moscow without first showing a ration card! Such a ra-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tioning policy on manufactures enabled the Soviet Government to send abroad more than $100,000,000 worth of manufactured goods last year out of a total export of $450,000,000.

Here is where the price that the population pays enters. Under the Five-Year Plan only productive goods are imported; no Soviet purchasing agents place orders for cloth, shoes, clothing or any of the thousand items so scarce in Soviet Russia. This generation is made to do without sufficient apparel, equipment—even kerosene—and in some regions food, in order that their sacrifices may be sold abroad and help pay for machinery. The productive goods now brought in will some day produce consumers' goods; this generation may not see the day unless the long-expected Messiah, the World Revolution, opens the Promised Land where there is not milk and honey, but flour, tea that is not made from dried fruit, and shoes that wear for more than two weeks. A prosperous country is one in which a citizen can buy a new pair of rubber overshoes when his ration, a pair a season, has worn out before winter ends!

Eager to export, compelled to meet bills annually for $450,000,000 worth of purchases abroad (and every bill to the present time has been met on the date due), valuta becomes the object of direct or indirect search on the part of every organ of Soviet Government. The Department of Foreign Trade works at schemes for increasing exports; the Department of Education tries to train technical experts who can take the places of the hired foreign engineers and save that much valuta; the Secret Police search out hidden hoards of foreign currency or prevent "depreciated rubles" from entering and leaving the country; the banks limit the mutual exchange of rubles for valuta by individuals to the one-sided exchange of valuta for rubles; the Soviet tourist agency thinks of new ways to attract foreigners to the Soviet Union and is even arranging autumn hunting trips in the north, hoping perhaps to set the fashion for a proletarian grouse season; the Department of the Interior now permits photographing almost anywhere without permits in order to make things easier for the bourgeois tourist with his travellers' checks; the museum authorities quietly sell duplicate works and, sometimes, single copies to foreign collectors; the Bakers' Union rewarded one member with five hundred rubles for discovering a home-produced dye for coloring cheap pastries which previously had to be bought with valuta abroad. Some of these are perhaps petty things, but the complete list of the means used to secure valuta or to economize in its spending would contain more curious items.

The search for valuta is not a problem in theoretical economics; it is the most important force motivating commercial relations between the Soviet Union and other lands to-day. Lacking long-term credits and forced to meet continuing and increasing obligations, Soviet Russia has been selling her exports in Western lands at prices with which foreign manufacturers cannot compete: Soviet coal in Boston undersells Pennsylvania anthracite; the German Reichstag had to raise the tariff on matches to meet Soviet prices; Soviet cotton prints have undersold all American goods in Persia. The search for valuta has grown so acute that there have been many charges of "dumping" brought against the Soviet Government. There are those people who say that the Soviet Union, with its unchanging desire to prepare the ground abroad for the World Revolution, has discovered a new weapon to fight capitalism—by means of exports.

The world-wide business depression has made the search for valuta all the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more acute: it has affected the Soviet Union in that purchasing contracts made in 1928–1929 must be paid for now with goods sold at 1931 commodity prices.

The earlier paragraphs of this article have shown how difficult it is to get a true estimate of the value of Soviet money in terms of the currency of other countries; the same difficulties arise in trying to estimate wages, production costs, and selling prices in the Soviet Union. Whether Soviet agents sell their goods abroad at prices less than the domestic cost of production is less important than the fact that they are able, because of the unified control over production, transportation, wages, and internal credits, to undersell foreign manufacturers in their own markets.

One effect of the Soviet search for valuta has been to band together anti-Soviet groups in America into an organization to fight the sale of Soviet products in this country. Groups of American business men, interested primarily in those products which Soviet Russia has in abundance—timber, manganese, pulp wood, and, in the not-distant future, wheat—are combining to support a bill proposed by Senator Oddie of Nevada to bar the importation of Soviet products into America.

The Soviet Union now buys about $130,000,000 worth of goods here annually and receives from the sale of its imports roughly $30,000,000; the trade balance is greatly in our favor. Senator Oddie's bill would force Soviet Russia to find that $30,000,000 elsewhere—although the senator and his group have no objections to the Soviet Union spending all its valuta here in orders to American manufacturers.

Such are some of the unique features of the Soviet monetary system. A German dancer experienced most of them at once while on a concert tour in the Soviet Union. Engaged for several performances at five hundred rubles each she received her total income in rubles. "But I should prefer to have marks, please," she said. The Soviet official was most obsequious but regretted that he could not secure marks for her. The banks would not exchange rubles for valuta. Furthermore, he regretted that law prevented her from taking the rubles abroad. "Then what am I supposed to do with this stuff?" she asked.

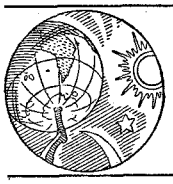
"You may buy jewelry and take that out if you wish," he said.

"That trash? All the best things in your stores you must pay for with marks —that I know. Swindlers you are," she cried and went off into tantrums that resounded throughout the Grand Hotel.

But a young Soviet employee had a better idea. "Why not buy some of our matches and export them? Sell them in Germany cheap—and think of the publicity you can get, the head-lines that will read, 'Ballet Dancer Undersells German Match Trust. Needs Valuta. Great Menace to Our Business!'"

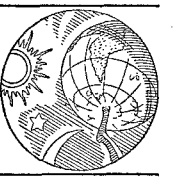
The fate of Russia is undoubtedly the most important subject in the world to-day. SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE *will publish in coming numbers important and informing articles on what the Soviet experiment means to the United States.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



STRAWS IN THE WIND

Significant notes in American life to-day



The Business Cycle Hits the Home

By GRACE NIES FLETCHER

UNEMPLOYMENT hit the white-collar man and his family with the catastrophic suddenness of a cyclone. He had made a casual acquaintance in college with the law of supply and demand; he had even wondered vaguely what became of the factory workers, suddenly thrown out of work for indefinite periods, about whom he read in the newspapers. But his was the purely academic interest of the potential employer. It never occurred to him that, well trained and competent, he could ever lack for something to do; that, given similar conditions, economic necessity made small distinction between overalls and white collars. So he was totally unprepared, mentally and financially, when the whirlwind of unemployment struck him where he stood.

The result was that in many cases the white-collar family either collapsed financially or was badly battered. Social and æsthetic values, even family ties, gave way before grim economic pressure. In thousands of white-collar homes to-day whether or not the wife shall have a career is no longer a theoretical query: she has to work. She no longer debates before a comfortable davenport audience: "Shall I best express my personality in the office or the nursery?" She is too busy answering the practical question: "When do we eat?"

"Why am I working?" repeated one young college graduate, formerly president of an exclusive bridge club, as her busy fingers rested for a moment upon her typewriter keys. "So that Nancy can stay in school. So that we can pay the instalments on the house. John was getting $15,000 as manager of a branch bank. We thought we were set for life, and were putting all our spare cash from his salary into buying stock in the company. Suddenly there was a merger and John got two weeks' notice! He looked for work for six months before we got really panicky. Then one day he couldn't meet his bank payments, and our stock was sold out. The next week I got this job."

Her chin went up proudly. "John's working now too. He's a street-car conductor!"

To such temporary expedients many a white-collar worker has been forced. He is not too proud to work at anything he can get; he is simply dazed at the necessity. When banks north, east, south, and west, have closed their doors during the past few months; when mergers in New York City alone have thrown an estimated total of over 10,000 bank workers out of jobs; when financial and securities companies in various parts of the country have not only cut their personnel to a skeleton but have reduced the salaries of the survivors from 20 to 50 per cent . . . is it any wonder that the white-collar wives have had to go to work?

A curious twist to the employment situation has been that the majority of wives found it easier to get work during the depression than their husbands. It has been not at all uncommon recently to hear a wife say: "Thank goodness, I have a job. Heaven only knows when Jim will get anything!"

The psychological snags in such a family situation are obvious. Taking the wife out of the home in the face of economic necessity has become the accepted practice in these days of married partnership; but the wife leaving the husband behind at home was still more devastating to the equilibrium of the family. It meant a rude upsetting of the delicate mechanism of family adjustment. "Are you going to be our mother now?" was the bewildered inquiry one three-year-old put to her father as she watched her mother start off for the eight-fifteen alone. Is it any wonder that after a few weeks of this, most husbands rushed out and snatched at any sort of employment, no matter how poorly paid or incongruous to their training, in order to salvage their self-respect? That

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the wife has quite as much right to be the sole wage earner as the husband, may be a reasonable theory, as many young moderns asserted; but putting such a theory into practice proved to be quite another matter.

But there were not many jobs to be snatched, even by men of proved brilliance. In accordance with the present trend, most of the white-collar husbands were specialists in their line, whether finance, merchandising, or organization. And employers, faced with an unprecedented supply of high-grade labor, were superspecialized in their requirements. "Don't you know," one financial magnate from the safe side of his mahogany desk told a young executive with three degrees and ten years of excellent banking experience who was pleading for a chance to work at any salary, "that if I want a bank president with one blue eye and one brown one, with a mole on the left side of his chin, that I can get him to-day? You're a trained banker? Hell! This town is lousy with them!"

The white-collar wife, on the other hand, had usually had some sort of routine office or professional experience before marriage, and all she needed to get back to any typewriter or filing cabinet was a little practice. The National Y. W. C. A. professional employment bureau found itself so swamped with wives who wanted to brush up on their former jobs that they had to install special rooms where women could go free of charge to experiment with office equipment; and fees were removed from professional and vocational classes, whenever necessary, so that this tide which was sweeping from the home to the office could be properly directed.

In spite of the fact that private employment agencies were overwhelmed and that relief employment bureaus refused to help women find jobs who had husbands out of work, thousands of white-collar wives went out and found work for themselves, either through former contacts or because they were willing to work for attenuated salaries. The books of the employment agencies read like dour fairy tales: a University of Michigan graduate addressing envelopes; the mother of one of last year's debutantes who came out at the Colony Club, quietly selling life insurance to her friends; young wives closing the doors of their own small homes behind them to take up "resident jobs" with wealthy families who were glad to get women of unusual culture as secretaries, governesses, or companions. Many of these wives concealed the fact that they were married; others quietly made arrangements to visit their husbands over the week ends!

Such a dragging up by the roots of the white-collar family gives an ironic twist to the benign contention of professional moralists who are chanting from press and pulpit the spiritual benefits which will accrue from our being thrown as a nation from unearned opulence to careful thriftiness. Too often the sweet flowers of the spirit which were to grow from our return to normal living and deflated values, have turned out to be the weeds of bewilderment, chagrin, and disillusionment. In too many cases the return has not been to normalcy; the swing of the financial pendulum has been too far. What spirit of humbleness could possibly fill the vacuum left by taking the wife out of the home where there are small children? Yet many modern wives have been forced to leave their families entirely, at least for the time being.

"We are working out our programme very well," said one young mother with an apprehensive glance over her shoulder at her husband. She snapped shut the cover of her suitcase that was labelled for Detroit. "I have it written right into my contract that the firm is to pay my way back every two months to look after the children!"

Such an arrangement, although unbelievable a generation ago, is to-day far from an isolated case. It is indicative of a definite modern trend, authorities on employment and relief agencies who have been wrestling with the white-collar employment situation during the past year, agree. "You can get almost any woman to go away from her home to-day if you pay her enough," was the callous remark of one New York agency head who is placing such workers. "They have to!"

What the optimists have failed to do in judging the merits of the situation is to differentiate between the results of a drop in income to comparative poverty and to actual penury. It is one thing to reduce your standard of living from $20,000 to $10,000 as one young couple did rather than go back and live with the family: it is quite another for a family of three to go from a salary of $6,000 to $2,500. To point this out, however, is far from denying the fact that the flatness of the family pocketbook has drawn many husbands and wives together.

There had grown up since the war a generation of young white-collar people who had never known anything but easy living. They stepped from college into salaries which their fathers would have worked ten years to attain,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and were swept upon the tidal wave of hysterical national prosperity to affluence. Their watchword was "individuality." Husband and wife drove their own cars upon their own private pursuits, and were content to meet at breakfast, the cocktail hour, and to sleep.

The descent from the Packard to the subway has been of undoubted educational value to this group. Elaborate parties have been supplanted by unexpectedly pleasant evenings at home. Display has given way to enforced temperance. It is even becoming smart to be economical. And certainly the most ardent advocate of the prohibition law could devise no surer method of enforcement than lack of cash to pay the bootlegger!

Even though expensive homes have been sacrificed, and children taken from private schools, there have been compensations. The wives who had "gained their freedom but lost their destination" have been brought back from the bridge table to the kitchen and the nursery, thus becoming once more economic assets. And for the first time in their married lives, many young husbands and wives find themselves working shoulder to shoulder for a common end . . . to maintain the family.

But of what use is it to draw families together spiritually and socially when there isn't enough money left to keep the roof over their heads? Buying on the instalment plan, anything from soap to houses and bank stocks, had such a grip upon the American home that emergency measures were all that saved many a white-collar family from total financial shipwreck. It is not callous indifference nor a desire to assert her independence, which is sending the young mother to Detroit (she hopes later to get a similar job nearer home); that drove another mother to pick up her two girls who were not getting enough to eat and to take them back with her to the homestead in northern New York where she is running a boarding-house until her husband's bond commissions pick up; that sent one woman back to her teaching job where she explained to the astonished principal that she must so arrange her classes as to have time off in between to nurse her six-weeks'-old daughter. This is sheer necessity. For the first time the white-collar family in large numbers is facing the fact which the factory worker learned long ago; that it is death to family stability, to gracious living, to be caught between the grindstones of the law of supply and demand.

To point out smugly that the white-collar man should have built up a financial backlog to meet just such a situation is locking the garage door after the car is stolen. As a matter of fact, most white-collar men did save . . . but in the modern manner.

"Putting your savings back into the company is like money in the bank," the officials told him. "You tie up with us and we'll see that you're not sorry." "Buy stocks, not to speculate, but as long-term investments," the reigning economists urged him. Yet the long-term investor was as badly off for ready cash when he lost his job as the rash speculator. And when the rub came, the dear old company left the employee standing out in the cold, holding the bag.

If he was buying stock in the company, the young executive who was fired because of the depression had two alternatives: he could either lose his stock and get his money back at interest (usually the stock had a potential value far exceeding the amount of money he had put into it); or he could borrow the money at the bank to pay for the balance due. He was loath to sacrifice his family's financial future by selling out. But how could he pay interest at the bank without any job? That was *his* problem now, the company assured him; they were no longer interested. Business, posing as patriarchal or democratic in policy, suddenly disclosed itself as benevolent only when it paid in immediate dollars and cents.

Not the least of the losses during the past near-panic has been the white-collar man's discovery that loyalty and conscientious endeavor, two of the pillars upon which the old-fashioned home was builded, had so low a commercial market value. While many businesses, realizing the potency of their employees' goodwill, used every means to carry them through till the business cycle should swing upward again, the majority of business executives were not so far-seeing. They severed ties of years' standing with a curt notice of dismissal. The same generation which had unearthed the bitter bones of a war to make the world safe for a democracy that had never existed, suddenly found itself faced with new disillusionment. They discovered themselves less valuable than a piece of machinery; for machinery must be oiled and cared for if it is to be useful again: human cogs could be thrown aside or replaced with cheaper material.

If retrenchment had been based upon priority of service, or even if its need had been explained to him, the white-collar man could at least have buttoned up the overcoat of his self-respect. But when a man who knows he has done his job well is fired while placid vice-presidents "whose father's their fortune" as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one man bitterly paraphrased it, are retained; when ten men are let go so that a high official with political affiliations may keep his huge salary, it is difficult to avoid a cynical attitude which often carries over into the home and private life, sometimes with tragic results. The increasing number of suicides among white-collar business men, many of them leaving young families, are not all due simply to money entanglements. "You'll find my affairs in good condition," wrote one man in the Middle West who had suddenly lost the job as officer in a trust company to which he had worked up as office boy. "I could go on. But what's the use?"

Less dramatic but quite as significant was the remark of one white-collar worker, out of a job, to his young son. "When you grow up, Johnny," said his father as he inked over the worn place in his glove, "you join the ranks of the stenographic five o'clock walkout. Why perspire to be fired?" But there was more than a grain of bitterness in his raillery.

Most tragic, however, has been the disillusionment of the white-collar executive over sixty, whose family life has been shattered too late to rebuild it. Either because his salary was so large that its elimination meant an appreciable saving in overhead, or because he had been sucked dry of his first usefulness, many of these older men were the first to go. One trust officer in the Middle West found himself dismissed after twenty years, six months before his pension was due. He had depended upon this pension, as sure as the rising sun, to support him and his wife the rest of their days. Now while his wife, untrained for business, went to live with a relative, he tramped from door to door, from office to office, where he had often been received as a man of standing, demanding, asking, then begging for work. But who wanted to take on a man over sixty? It is such men who make up the backbone of the first white-collar breadlines our country had seen in years. It is their homes that are irretrievably broken.

"Are they bitter?" repeated the head of an employment relief association in New York City as she looked down the line of men, now ghosts of the well-dressed executives they had been a few months ago, who were fumbling with the wrappings on a hunk of free sandwiches. "They're too broken to be bitter. They just can't believe this is happening to them."

Too broken to be bitter . . . what an epitaph for any man's financial tombstone! There is something wrong with an economic system that deals with human values with such Jove-like gestures. Many businesses were as hard hit by the slump as individuals; they had to fire men wholesale. But why was this so? Why, in a country as rich as ours in mental and material resources, that prides itself upon its efficiency, couldn't business have set up a reserve behind its human as well as its material assets? Is it the inevitable price of industrial and financial advance that the home be broken up in time of business depression?

The joker in the situation is that in breaking up the home, business loses its best customer. Subtly dangerous to the future of industry, to say nothing of our national social structure, are the seeds of economic fear that have been sown during the past few months.

" 'How lucky you haven't any children!' If I've heard that once, I've heard it a hundred times since Jerry lost his job," said one young wife who used to bemoan her lack of a family. "And I'm beginning to wonder if that's not about right!"

People who are afraid to rear families will not buy houses, vacuums, washing-machines; do not need two automobiles; nor will they deny themselves for savings accounts for education nor for heavy life insurance. Yet it is just such family demands which keep the wheels of industry turning. Having adopted honesty as its best policy, could not business go a step farther, and as a purely defense measure plan to stabilize rather than wreck the home market in times of stress?

While it is true that the conditions which are forcing the white-collar wife out of the home are undoubtedly temporary, and in most cases she will come back to her family as the business curve turns upward, this return to normal will not be as rapid as some people like to think. The wife is not going to give up her earning capacity until she is sure that this emergency cannot soon arise again. Moreover, when the financial stringency is over, the white-collar worker will still have the modern merger mania to reckon with. What the introduction of the machine did to the factory worker, the merger in modern business and finance is doing to the white-collar worker . . . making him, no matter how well trained, a temporary drug on the market. Eventually the increased volume of business will absorb him back into full usefulness. But meanwhile his wife will have to continue to work outside the home if the family standard of living is to be maintained.

"I'm going to save enough to buy us a joint annuity before I stop," remarked one wife who is managing the family existence in a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

small apartment between the demands of a difficult organization job. "It's not as easy as it sounds to go back to living on the same salary on which you started out as a bride . . . especially when you earn part of it. It takes the resilience of extreme youth, I find, to live en masse in a three-room apartment! I hate the smell of other people's garbage being incinerated. I loathe the whoop of other people's Frigidaires and radios. And I think I might be spared the wails of other people's babies now that I have raised my own." She smiled apologetically. "I guess the elastic has just gone out of me. But I'm sure of this. I'm not giving up my job until we're *safe*."

But where does safety for the white-collar family lie? Banks have failed as well as stock houses in the past year. The greatest hope for the future lies in the fact that whatever the depression may have done to the status of his home, at least the white-collar worker has been forced to *think*. Never before has the social aspect of practical economics, or, to put it more plainly, the dependence of the family structure upon the conduct of business, been so general a topic of conversation at the American dinner table. After all, many of these young executives who are riding the storm of social adjustment are potential employers. Our present capitalistic system is far more apt to be modified by these disillusioned young white-collar workers than by all the Reds who parade in the springtime. Unemployment may have hit the white-collar family like a cyclone, but at least it may teach them to build a storm cellar for the future.

The Constitution and Jerry

By W. S. ANDREWS

A former Judge of the Court of Appeals of New York State narrates an early case of attack on the Constitution

Laws have no lasting vitality, save in the spirit of the People.—Aristotle.

In a small room of the old brick Raynor Block in Syracuse, New York, sat a man. He was almost white, but with a trace of black blood, the son of a white father and a mulatto mother. He was forty years old, with bright, intelligent eyes; strong and muscular, with torn clothing and shackled hands and feet. For he was a slave as his mother had been before him, owned as cattle are owned. And now he was a fugitive to be returned to his master.

As he sat there Jerry remembered the North Carolina plantation where he was born. Pictures of childhood came, of the wide fields, the Negro cabins, the great house where he had played, a privileged slave boy, with his owner's children. He thought of the long journey by wagon of family and slaves to a new home in Missouri. He thought of his life there. He had not been ill-treated. His owner, the Senator, who was probably his father also, had given him much education. He had charge of the plantation. But he was not free. The whisper came that if Jerry wished to escape, help was at hand. And so, one day, he vanished.

What happened the records do not show in detail. But travelling by night, hidden by day in stations of the underground railway, slowly he made his way until he came to Syracuse.

There he seemed safe. Among its 25,000 inhabitants were separately listed in its directory ninety-seven "colored persons," largely escaped slaves. It was a noted station on the underground railway. Its sympathies were mostly anti-slavery, and the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, which Washington had signed, was ineffective. So, quietly, he sought employment, first as a carpenter; later, setting up a cooper shop of his own, he was successful and respected.

But now a change had come. The Constitu-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion had provided that a slave escaping to another State should be delivered to his master. The provision was clear and definite. Practically a dead letter till now, the South demanded that it be enforced. So came the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Property was to be returned to its owner, as stolen automobiles are returned to-day, and supervising this return were to be the forces of the federal government. It simply secured what was guaranteed by the Constitution. For it Daniel Webster had voted, sacrificing his future to his courage and his sense of duty.

Yet the law was offensive to the thoughts and beliefs of large sections of the North. Wendell Phillips called the Constitution "a covenant with death and a league with hell." Whittier pictured Webster, driven "fiend-goaded, down the endless dark from hope and heaven." Theodore Parker preached that an officer's oath to obey the law was not morally binding and that he who observed it was worse than a Nero. The doctrine of obedience to law, he added, lies at the base of every despot's throne. And if the Bible defends slavery so much the worse for the Bible. The Reverend Henry C. Wright declared that "instant death" ought to be inflicted on any one who tried to execute the statute. The Reverend B. B. Raymond, a Baptist clergyman of Syracuse, also preached that "blood will flow if we carry out this accursed law." In pulpits everywhere disobedience was openly urged. So distinguished an authority as Senator Seward announced that the clause in the Constitution as to slaves was itself invalid because it was against the law of nature and the law of nations, and, therefore, not binding on righteous men and women. Also a political party with these principles was formed and became active.

There were other views. The Constitution was the supreme law of the land. To it and to every word of it obedience was due; so the Supreme Court said.

There were disturbances, clashing convictions, everywhere. Some States had forbidden their officials to interfere in any attempt to return a fugitive slave. This was far from nullification. No obligation to enforce a federal statute rested on State officers. Enforcement was the duty of the federal government alone. There was no refusal to obey. Action under it was left where it belonged. So it was said by Mr. Justice Story.

Nowhere was feeling higher than in Syracuse. The head of one of its most influential churches was the Reverend Samuel J. May, a noted abolitionist. Another, Gerrit Smith, lived in the near-by village of Peterboro. These men had a large following and they were uncompromising in their views. If such a law be essential to the republic, said May, let the republic be broken. In spite of the statute a public meeting was held, presided over by the mayor and addressed by the Honorable Charles B. Sedgwick, a distinguished lawyer, later a member of Congress. A vigilance committee was formed to protect fugitive slaves; upon the tolling of a bell, when any one of them was in danger, the committee was to meet. A resolution was passed which, in terms scarcely veiled, encouraged disobedience. In May, 1851, the anti-slavery society, welcomed by Gerrit Smith and Samuel J. May, met in the city; it resolved "that as to the Fugitive Slave Law, we execrate it, we spit upon it, we trample it under our feet."

Then came Webster to Syracuse and made a public speech defending his action. "I tell you if men get together and declare that a law of Congress shall not be executed . . . and assemble in numbers to prevent the execution of such law—they are traitors. . . . Depend upon it the law will be executed in its spirit and to its letter. It will be executed in all the great cities—here in Syracuse—in the midst of the next anti-slavery convention." There was some applause, more hisses. That speech changed no one's convictions.

On October 1, 1851, the city was filled with visitors. A convention of the so-called Liberal, or Abolition, party was in session, and also farmers from the country around had come to an agricultural fair.

With this background Jerry sat in the little room that bright day in October, in irons, waiting for his fate. There was little doubt what it would be. He had been identified. The commissioner must perforce sign the warrant. Returned to Missouri, he could never hope again for the ease and comfort of earlier days; he would be watched and guarded—probably sold to the dreaded life of some Louisiana sugar plantation. Only that morning, as he worked quietly in his shop he had been arrested and taken at once before the United States Commissioner. The hearing had begun in a court-room crowded with sympathizers. For the bell, the vigilantes' bell, had tolled. All over the little city people had stopped to listen to that thrilling sound—had breathed fast, and hurried to the court-room. Church bells had joined the clamor. The convention had adjourned and its members had flocked to the hall. Testimony that Jerry was a fugi-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tive slave had been given. And then when things were blackest, suddenly had come a dramatic episode. Jumping from his chair, rushing to the door with the crowd opening before him and closing between him and his pursuers, falling down the stairway, running through the crush in the open square, Jerry had escaped. But not for long. Panting, falling, hindered by his shackles, in less than half a mile the marshals had caught him. Struggling and fighting he was subdued, roughly thrown into a cart, and dragged back to the court-room.

Here the confusion was great. Orderly procedure was impossible, for outside was a yelling mob, stones were thrown and violence threatened. The Commissioner at length adjourned proceedings until the next day.

Meanwhile the vigilance committee had not been idle. By early candle-light, some thirty men, including Mr. May and Mr. Smith, gathered in a private office of a Doctor Hoyt. They passed the Doctor—a leader—in single file, clasping his hand and pledging themselves to be true. There was some discussion as to the possibility of a favorable decision by the Commissioner, but they would not wait. Gerrit Smith said:

"It is not unlikely the Commissioner will release Jerry if the examination is suffered to proceed—but the moral effect of such an acquittal will be as nothing to a bold and forcible rescue."

Arming themselves with clubs, axes, and iron rods, and carrying a heavy beam, the committee marched to the Raynor Block. Smashing the windows, ripping the door from its hinges, they poured into an outer room. Next they assaulted with axe and battering ram the partition between them and the room where Jerry was confined. They overpowered the guards, breaking, in the course of their proceedings, the arm of one of the marshals. Terrified, the guards finally pushed Jerry out to his deliverers, who carried him off in triumph.

How his manacles were filed away; how, dressed as a woman, he was concealed for four days in the city; how, crouching beneath sacks in a butcher's cart, he was driven north; how he was hidden by Oswego County farmers (a story recalling the thrill of escapes during the French "Terror"); how finally he was shipped to Kingston, Canada, need not be detailed. Nor need the succeeding history of the rioters. Arrested, indicted, arraigned, bailed out by Senator Seward and entertained by him, they were finally released because the government despaired of finding a jury that would vote for conviction. Yet not all were even indicted. Mr. May and Mr. Smith, glorying in their crime, challenged prosecution, but their challenge was never accepted. The scene ends with an act of bitter comedy. Syracuse women collected thirty of the old-time silver five-cent pieces and sent them to the United States District Judge with the message: "Remember Judas. Go thou and do likewise."

As to the rescue, however, all were not agreed. A mass meeting of the citizens of Onondaga County justified it. The Liberal convention, after a courteous reference to Webster as "that base and infamous enemy of the human race," resolved: "We feel bound to declare that if any class of criminals deserve to be struck down in instant death, it is Kidnappers (United States Marshals obeying the statute)." There were references to the "devil-prompted speeches of politicians and devil-prompted sermons of priests," and to this "doomed and damned nation." Invective was thick and superlative.

But there were those who differed. A call was signed by over one hundred of the leading citizens of Syracuse for a meeting to uphold the Constitution and the law. George F. Comstock, the greatest lawyer in the State, soon to become a member of the Court of Appeals, headed the committee on resolutions. Judges, lawyers, physicians, clergymen, bankers were present. It was said the statute was clear. It bound all. No man might decide for himself what laws he would obey and what violate. That was a dangerous doctrine where statutes expressed the will of the majority. If the statute was wrong, repeal it. While it remained it was a moral wrong to disregard it.

Such arguments accomplished little. Mr. May was unrepentant. "Will they, then," he told his congregation, "Americans as they are, will they maintain that a government cannot enact a law so bad that the people would be justified in trampling it under foot? Our legalized persecutors may take from us our money, our liberty, our life. They cannot rob us of our respect for the rights of man and our consciousness of good intention."

And the law never was successfully enforced. In spite of the Constitution, in spite of statute, the South never gained what it desired.

In those days it was impossible to enforce a statute, for all its criminal penalties, which did not touch the conscience of the people. Shall we be more successful now?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

College Girls and Marriage

By A COLLEGE WIFE

TEN years ago I was graduated from college, three years ago I was married, and to make the record complete, so far I have no child.

I am one of those dreadful females who cause such qualms in the minds of sociologists, because I don't seem to be fulfilling my duty toward the race. Of course I am still only thirty-two years old, so hope is not yet ended; but already I find myself (as an invisible statistical unit) in the lists of those who fail America in one of her basic needs, and of course I don't like to be there. Nobody likes to be accounted a failure from any point of view.

Sociologists are always looking around for reasons why the upper classes have fewer children than the lower classes, and it is natural that for some time they should have been worried over the low production of children among graduates of women's colleges. I know we have not as many children as we ought to have, or even might like to have, but I sometimes wonder just how far we may lay the blame of "failure" to our Alma Mater. Perhaps not so far as Doctor Henry T. Moore, president of Skidmore College, supposes. In his article "Women's Colleges and Race Extinction," in SCRIBNER'S, he states his belief that by a reorganization of the curricula in women's colleges, the young women at graduation might be better fitted for their biological duties. Perhaps he is right, but I doubt it.

Speaking as a person accused by the sociologists, I do not believe my college could ever have so arranged things that I should marry upon graduation and bear a child every other year until my record of productivity should show the 5.44 children that as a worthy mother I should have expected a generation ago. The only thing that could perhaps have accomplished this would have been my not going to college at all.

Personally I never found my college "prejudicing . . . graduates against wifehood and motherhood," as Henry R. Carey charges in his article which he calls "Sterilizing the Fittest."

Like many of my classmates, I left college with a large interest in marriage, but an even stronger interest in earning my own living until such time as somebody I could really love, and remain interested in for life, might put in an appearance. I didn't want to rush into marriage and then get a divorce later.

Most of my friends at home had married years ago. They had not gone to college. Some —probably slightly more than half—were happy. A few were already divorced. More, even in the two or three years that had elapsed, had become restless, or grown up and found themselves dissatisfied with their husbands and bored with their young children. All of these married ones had at least started out to fulfil their biological duty, so that no sociologist would have called them failures or traitors to the race.

The circumstances preventing early marriage and many children among women college graduates seem to me to be three. The first is simple and obvious. The normal biological age for a girl to fall in love and want to marry is somewhere between eighteen and twenty-five. If anything, this is a conservatively late age-span. I do not mean that most girls would actually marry between these years, but that their physical interest in the opposite sex, if they are reasonably well brought up and "guarded," will reach its maximum during this time, and result in marriage then or later. A great many girls do marry right away, sometimes impulsively, and practically all who marry early produce children. But if a girl is away at college during four or more of these years, and perhaps at school during one or two of them, before she enters college, she does not and cannot have the same interest in young men, or opportunity to fall in love with them, that she would have if she stayed at home and did nothing but "come out" and make herself as socially attractive as possible. When the college girl comes home after graduation, she finds most of the eligible young men already snapped up by her stay-at-home sisters, and nobody of her own age left single except a few unattractive people of both sexes, who are bound to seem duller than ever to her now.

The second circumstance preventing the college girl's early marriage lies with the men. Young men under thirty rarely care for girls who are college graduates. They say time and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time again that they are afraid of college women. College women know too much and want to do too much. They are not yielding and gracious as they should be—not completely wrapped up in being wives. They tend to be gregarious and to want to do something besides play around and keep house. Worse than all this, they have opinions of their own, which are sometimes at shocking variance with the views of young men. I think Doctor Moore may look here for his reasons why men who will endow their own colleges generously will cut down to almost nothing their subscriptions to women's colleges. It isn't that they fear their families will die out. It is that they fear their daughters, if they go to college, will become hard, ambitious, efficient, offensive in opinion, and ugly to look upon.

And the worst of it is they may! Girls who have been taught to think are less vapidly agreeable and malleable than their purely social sisters. They are stronger, more resolute, more serious, and less lovely. They don't think it matters so horribly if their hair looks mussy or their nose shines, or they have to wear glasses to read, or feel more comfortable in flat shoes. After they leave college it may take them years to discover that for the purpose of getting a husband all these things do matter horribly, and they had better look into them as quickly as possible, and likewise put a damper on their obvious ambitions and abilities, and try to behave as if they had no brains at all.

Of course a few smart and beautiful girls do go to college and emerge still smart and beautiful, but they are received back enthusiastically into society more in spite of their learned degrees than because of any added charm that learning may have given them. For several years your beautiful girl graduate may have to live down the appalling fact that she actually received a Phi Beta Kappa key, or ever dreamed of being interested in, say, biological chemistry.

Usually the only companionable men a college girl can find when she graduates—men who aren't by their own statement afraid of her, who don't mind that she isn't a doll, and can stand her having thoughts of her own—are older men, men at least over thirty. As many times as not they are already married. And if unmarried, they are quite as frequently determined bachelors. They are happy to be with young women who are not entirely concerned with flirting, going on parties, and petting; but their interest in a girl's intellectual qualities does not readily lead to marriage. It may be first-rate for a business relationship, but it is at the other end of the rope from falling in love.

Then there is the third reason—one which may shock some people, but it is nevertheless the truth. Among the so-called upper classes, the classes from which most of the débutantes and college women are drawn, money is and must be a very special consideration. Few parents encourage a débutante to marry a poor man with an intellectual occupation. Instead they try to surround a pretty daughter with young men of means or with business futures, or they may give their daughter a *dot* sufficient for her own and her husband's immediate needs, with one eye on the son-in-law's future earning power. The young couple, thus supplied, can set about fulfilling their biological duty with no money worries in their heads. Two or three babies, more or less, won't greatly strain the family budget. So the babies, which most young couples want, are prompt to arrive.

But with the college girl it is a different matter. She marries later because she is only free to marry later, after graduation. She knows her own mind better than her débutante sister, and she marries somebody that she wants to marry, whether he be eligible in her parents' eyes or not. He may have no money and very little likelihood of ever getting any, but that won't stop the college woman. She is more afraid of boredom in marriage than she is of poverty, so she looks to it that she won't be bored. She knows she can probably earn her own living, and she is perfectly willing, if necessary, to live poor.

But when it comes to children she may delay. Without money and with the need to work herself, children would be almost impossible. When she sees her way free to have them, she plans to have them. But delaying means that she may never have them, or that she may have very few. She wants to be able to give them advantages that she herself had, and to save for them takes time. In growing thoughtful and analytical she grows cautious, and perhaps thinks it better to have no children at all, rather than to have ones for which very little can be provided. She knows that there are too many unprovided-for children already in the world.

No art interest or home-making courses can ever overcome these three main difficulties to an increased marriage and birth rate among college women. College women, like any others, want to marry and have children, but that is not always all they want. If all that is

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to be asked of them in life is the fulfilling of their biological functions and the practising of the household arts and graces, there should be no women's colleges, and education should be, as it was originally, reserved for men.

But if women wish to have trained minds, they will want to go to college. And if they plan to marry afterward, as they nearly always do, they may well keep in mind a few simple truths, and have them well rooted in their consciousnesses before they start in on a college career. A college girl ought to be warned that unless she is very pretty and socially gifted, she won't be treated like a débutante when she graduates. Men won't flock to ask her hand in marriage. She won't know nearly so many eligible young men as her sister who didn't go to college, and she won't have a fair chance at marrying the few she does know. She will be laughed at, feared, or disliked among those of her own age, because she is better educated and has wider interests than they have themselves. The people who fall in love with her will be men who are far more interesting than her sister's suitors, but less wealthy, less able to provide for a family, and even less interested in marrying and having a family at all.

She ought also to know that if she does marry she may have to be poor. Any one trying to be poor in the "upper classes" in America to-day will find that there is much to learn about how to do it gracefully. The practical details of housekeeping, of cooking and sewing and keeping a place in order, ought to be learned (at home) by every college girl, to make her more fit to slip into a possibly difficult rôle if the time comes for her to marry a poor man.

And she needs to know how to keep herself as well and as personable as if she were a petted débutante fresh from a finishing school. No college will teach her this at present. College is really interested only in cultivating her brain, and will give her only the amount of physical care and training to make her an efficient student. The overworked, brain-fagged, neurasthenic woman graduate is a sad sight that nobody wants to marry and that probably wouldn't have the natural energy to want a child if somebody actually did marry her.

And a girl might also be told what a well-known gynecologist told me the other day in refutation of much female gossip: that even if she does marry late or have to wait before having children, there is still no reason why she shouldn't have the children when she is ready. The main difference between having a first baby at thirty and having one at twenty, if a woman is normally healthy, is a psychological difference. The physical risk to mother and child is not perceptibly greater, but the mental risk—which is largely within the woman's control—makes all the difference in the world. A young wife takes the event of having a baby much as she takes any other exciting and slightly dangerous event—quite in her stride; the older woman may think and brood about it too much, and cut down her energy by such brooding. But if she gives up useless worrying, she too can have her babies safely, even if they can't come when she is just over being a child herself.

But the colleges themselves, staffed as they are for the most part with estimable but unworldly spinsters, have still a great deal to learn. If more married women and more men, and fewer unattractive elderly maiden ladies taught in the colleges, far more girls would be graduated who both looked and acted like good prospective wives and mothers. As it is, most of the eminently marriageable girls leave college and marry before graduation, and the graduated product is pretty generally harsh, stiff, and formidable. Especially is this true of the more brilliant girls, not the "grinds" who seem to have been provided by nature for other than biological achievements, but the general run of girls with really good all-around minds. They are the prey of individual teachers and departments who care more for the intellectual successes of their students than they do for turning out into the world, later on, well-balanced and capable young women. In the rush of work and the feverish reaching toward an intellectual goal, they force their pupils to forget or overlook that they are potentially charming girls who will go out into the world where marriage and children will eventually seem far more important than all the Phi Beta Kappa keys ever stamped out. At present all the arrangements for "majors" and "minors" do not keep a good student from being victimized by the jealousy of a department that proceeds on the theory that it doesn't matter what a student does with the rest of her college work, so long as she does superbly well for them. With almost all departments feeling this way, the student is torn by an array of work which ends by injuring her health. A less hard, more human faculty would never stand for this. It is only the unmarried female teachers who are past their physical attractiveness who will stand for it to-day. The men and married women on the faculty never do.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Besides doing something about the mental strain, the woman's college could turn out a far more marriageable product if it put less physical strain on girls. Most boarding-schools know better than to require girls temporarily excused from athletic work to walk long distances to a cold gymnasium and sit for an hour watching the work of the others, and getting thoroughly chilled. Yet strains of this type are to be endured in every college, and they may not seem to harm a girl during her first year or two, but they most certainly do harm her later on, often after she has been graduated. Another thing that wears girls down in college (not boarding-school) is poor or insufficient food. The chalky rubbish fed to them is often mere roughage with very little nourishment. Girls with allowances can supplement the food in the halls with the usual chocolate, cheese, cream, and other concentrated foods that growing people crave; but girls without ready funds must earn the money to supply these necessary things.

However, looking out for physical and mental well-being is about the most that a woman's college can do for a woman beyond teaching her what she goes there to learn. It's no use blaming the college curricula if she doesn't marry and have children, though it would certainly help her to retain her natural femininity if she were to be guided by a college faculty made up in large measure of human, warm-blooded people.

Most of the blame for her failure is inherent in the predicament of her going to college at all, but at least a part of it must be laid to society, and to the large number of men who are still unwilling to marry thinking women, and continue to prefer very young, affectionate, pretty, and opinionless girls, who are bound to make more docile, if less faithful, wives.

The Control of Human Sterility

By JAMES A. TOBEY, Dr. P. H.

Since the days of Dagda, keeper of the inexhaustible caldron of the ancient Celts, mankind has eagerly sought fertility. In his quest he has invoked the aid of Ashtar and Ariadne and the cat-headed Ubastis; he has made sacrifices of rams to Aphrodite and he-goats to Artemis; he has danced in the festivals of Diana and the ceremonies of Demeter and Ceres. Sometimes the goddess has looked upon him with favor, but often she has spurned him, whether he was in Egypt or Crete or Phœnicia or Greece or Rome or anywhere else.

In Talmudic times the wife of Manoah was told: "If you wish to get children, take the skin of a fox, burn it in a fire, take the ashes and mix them with water, and drink of that water three days, three times each day, and you will get a child."

The Talmud also tells us that a cock and a hen were carried as symbols of fertility before the bride and her consort on their wedding-day. In later Hebrew times Moses promised the Israelites numerous progeny as a reward for the journey into the promised land.

Throughout the ages women have sought magical cures for barrenness. At Bethlehem there is a cave called the Milk Grotto, where, according to legend, the Holy Family took refuge. As the Virgin nursed the Child, a drop of her milk fell on the floor, with the consequence that this grotto has since been considered to possess the power to promote fertility among all women who sojourn in it. In certain non-Christian peoples the sun has been worshipped in past centuries as the producer of the greatly desired fertility. The Middle Ages, with their innumerable superstitions and their dependence on legerdemain, likewise were replete with mystical cures for barren marriages. Even to-day, reliance solely upon prayer and superstitious rites has not been wholly abandoned.

The promotion of fertility, or the power to beget living offspring, is just as important and vital a problem in many modern families as the prevention of procreation seems to be in many others. Sterility control is, in fact, even more significant than birth control, for it is

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

usually more difficult to get what seems to be lacking than to prevent what seems to be abundant.

One out of every six marriages in the United States now fails to result in live issue. Since about a million and a quarter marriages are consummated annually in this country, this means that approximately 200,000 of them are fruitless from the standpoint of progeny. In most instances this unfortunate condition is not due to conscious attempts to limit the population, but to physiological sterility. Sometimes the situation is accepted with humility and resignation, sometimes frantic attempts are made to overcome it, and sometimes the tribulations induced by it culminate in one of the nearly 200,000 divorces which are granted annually in our advanced American civilization.

Sterility is somewhat like smallpox. It is pestiferous when it occurs but usually can be prevented. Like smallpox, a barren marriage is generally regarded as a misfortune, and often as a disgrace, though it is not necessarily either. Sterility is not, of course, contagious, and the analogy would be even stronger if it were compared to pellagra, the dietary deficiency disease which is so prevalent in our Southern States in times of economic stress. Sterility is, in fact, often caused by improper nutrition.

The idea that diet could influence fertility is an ancient one, but only in recent years have the scientific reasons for it been adduced. Charles Darwin asserted in the middle of the last century that the amount of food affects the sterility of the individual, and Herbert Spencer declared that an abundance of nutrition sufficient to leave a large excess after defraying the cost of carrying on parental life, is accompanied by a high rate of genesis. On many occasions famines have been observed by physicians to bring about cessation of menses in women and a reduction in the number of pregnancies.

To-day we know that it is not so much the quantity of food as its quality which influences reproduction, fertility, gestation, and parturition. Over-eating, which leads to obesity or even to overweight, does not facilitate fertility, but has a reverse effect. It is the well-balanced diet which is conducive to human fecundity, and such nutriment is within the reach of all persons if they only know how to select it. An adequate diet is, moreover, not necessarily an expensive one. As long ago as 1813 a leading book on domestic medicine stated that "The inhabitants of every country are prolific in proportion to their poverty, and it would be an easy matter to adduce many instances of women who, by being reduced to living entirely upon milk and vegetable diet, have conceived and brought forth children, though they never had any before."

Here was an observation which modern science has confirmed. Milk and certain vegetables do promote fertility in many persons when these products are abundantly used in the dietary regimen. Other foods which help to exert this beneficial effect are eggs, whole-grain cereals, dairy products generally, and certain fruits. If the daily diet is built around the so-called protective foods, milk, fruits, and the green leafy vegetables such as lettuce, spinach, peas, beans, cabbage, chard, and the like, health and vitality will be fostered, and fertility will be improved and maintained.

Evidence to support this contention is abundant. Not only are the laboratories of the biochemists constantly giving us the proof, but controlled clinical observations on many individuals have revealed the importance of good nutrition in the prevention of sterility. Thus, the beneficial effect of a single food on fertility has been demonstrated in the laboratory of Professor Henry C. Sherman at Columbia University in New York. Here during the course of the last decade this authority on nutrition has successfully raised some twenty-five generations of experimental animals on a diet consisting entirely of a mixture of whole-milk powder and whole-wheat powder. The interesting point, however, is not merely that this diet is adequate for reproduction and the successful raising of offspring, but that when the amount of milk in this ration is doubled, so that it comprises one-third instead of one-sixth, remarkable results with respect to increased fertility have been achieved. The animals on this optimum diet have regularly displayed earlier maturity, a longer duration of the prime of life, and even greater success in the production and rearing of their young. They have also shown increased longevity.

On the clinical side we have the experiences of gynecologists, who have achieved gratifying results in their patients by means of improvement in diet. In a recent issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association* there were reported the cases of 206 sterile women, who consulted one specialist over a period of two years. Analyses of the diets of these women revealed that the nutrition of many of them deviated in many important respects from an adequate and well-balanced fare. This was nothing unusual, for defective diets are as common among the well-to-do, even among

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

those sufficiently affluent to consult a specialist, as among the poorer classes.

After treatment, forty of these afflicted women became pregnant, an achievement accomplished in most cases chiefly by improvement in diet. The foods employed consisted in general of eggs, meat, milk, butter, cod-liver oil, green vegetables, and fresh fruit, the quantity yielding somewhat over 2,200 calories per day. In some instances it was not the wife but the husband who needed a corrective diet.

Experimental data on the value of diet in the promotion of fertility has also been corroborated by other scientific observations on the human race. An officer of the British Medical Service in India, Doctor Robert McCarrison, discovered far in the Himalayas an isolated tribe, the members of which are distinguished by a magnificent physique, and a potent fertility, with the virile characteristics of youth retained until late in life. The diet of this remarkable race consists almost entirely of goat's milk, supplemented by certain vegetables. Goat's milk, incidentally, has no magical properties not possessed by cow's milk. In the Panjab section of India, where the pastoral people consume as much as a gallon of milk a day, an amazingly high fertility, with a birth-rate as high as 42 per 1,000, has been reported by British medical officials.

In his monumental "Principles of Biology," Herbert Spencer quotes the traveller Barrow as reporting that the South African Kaffirs were a particularly fertile people. "Rich in cattle," he writes, "leading easy lives, and living almost exclusively on animal food (chiefly milk, with occasional flesh), these people were then reputed to have a very high rate of multiplication." Spencer devotes several whole chapters to a discussion of the coincidence between high nutrition and genesis, though he was, of course, writing long before the advent of the modern science of nutrition.

The first really scientific clew to the relationship between diet and reproduction came in 1911 as a result of nutritional experiments with animals. In 1906 Doctor S. M. Babcock started an investigation at the Wisconsin Experiment Station to determine the effects of feeding to cattle similar rations derived from different plants. Thus, one group of animals received a ration of wheat only, another got corn only, a third was favored with the oat plant, while the fourth group had food of the same chemical composition, but made up of all three of the plants, wheat, oats, and corn. In the conduct of this brilliant test, Doctor Babcock had the assistance of E. B. Hart and G. C. Humphrey, and later of Harry Steenbock and E. V. McCollum, all names to conjure with in the modern science of nutrition.

At the end of a year the effects of these different diets on the young heifer calves were somewhat startling. Those animals who were corn-fed were sleek and well nourished, carrying their young to full term and producing vigorous offspring. The wheat-fed group, on the other hand, were rough and gaunt. Their young were small and prematurely born, usually dead at birth or succumbing soon afterward. The oat-fed group gave better results than the wheat-fed, but much poorer than the corn-fed, as did also the control group which had received the combination of foods.

The explanation for these interesting and significant results was not forthcoming until several years later. At the time of the Wisconsin experiments those elusive elements now called vitamins were more or less unknown. In 1915, however, Professor McCollum and his co-workers noticed that certain diets which promoted growth in laboratory animals failed to stimulate reproduction.

Suspicion was then pointed at a lack of the vitamins, the accessory food factors, two of which had been discovered by that time. Today, after a legion of scientific investigations, we know that it is the presence or absence of certain of the half-dozen or more recognized vitamins which chiefly influences fertility favorably or adversely. The minerals in the diet, particularly calcium or lime salts, also play a certain part, but the vitamins have the principal rôle.

During the past three decades half a dozen of these vitamins have been discovered and the functions of each has been more or less determined. Thus, vitamin A promotes growth, general good health, a favorable resistance to disease, and fertility. Vitamin B, which has lately been shown actually to be twins and probably triplets, also promotes growth. One fraction of it prevents the disease known as beri-beri, while the other, now generally called vitamin G, prevents pellagra. Vitamin C averts scurvy and also helps to build bones, while vitamin D prevents rickets and brings about the proper deposition of the lime salts which construct bones and teeth. The vitamins also play other parts in the performance, or metabolism, of the human machine, but those functions mentioned are, in general, their chief duties.

Among this elusive category of vital sparks, or vitamins, there is one which is actually an anti-sterility vitamin, for its sole function

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seems to be to aid in the promotion of fertility, at least in white rats. This vitamin, discovered in 1918 and known as vitamin E, is really not of great practical importance, as it is widely distributed in nature, occurring in muscle meats, in butter, in grains, and in many vegetables. Individuals need not worry about any conspicuous lack of it, for those who seek improved fertility should endeavor instead to secure ample amounts of vitamins A, B, and G in their daily victuals, and these may be obtained from such foods as milk, green vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and eggs.

A passing allusion to this anti-sterility vitamin in an article on diet contributed by the writer to a woman's magazine of wide circulation elicited immediate responses from several women who desperately wanted children. One of them wrote that she had been doctoring for several years with a number of eminent gynecologists, so far without results, and that none of them had so much as mentioned diet to her. She wondered, with anguish in every line of her letter, whether she, and perhaps her physicians, had missed the real remedy all these years.

It might have been so. On the other hand, important as is diet, it is not the only factor in sterility. In order to secure successful reproduction, there must be ovulation in the female, migration of the ovum, fertilization by the male, implantation in the uterus, and successful growth there. Defects may occur in one or several of these various steps, either on the part of the male or female, or both. Science does not know positively the specific effect of nutrition on all of these physical operations, but it does know the effect of good or bad diets on many of them. Then, there are also numerous other causes of sterility, mechanical and otherwise. The medical advisers of the lady mentioned may have realized that the right food might have made no difference in her particular case, because of other insurmountable difficulties, though proper nutrition is always worth trying, because of its beneficial effect on general health, if for no other reason.

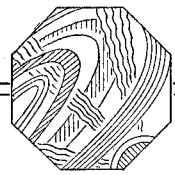
Early abortion is, in general, due to the same nutritional deficiencies as is sterility. If the embryo is to survive and not to be resorbed, it must be guarded against malnutrition, which means, of course, that the expectant mother must be adequately nourished. Many women who have shown a history of unsuccessful pregnancies have later given birth to full-term infants as a result of scientific attention to their dietary needs during the prenatal period.

Although proper diet favorably promotes reproduction, it does not exert any influence on the sex of the child, so far as is known to-day. As long ago as 1897 a scientist made the interesting claim that the sex of the child could be determined by the nutrition of the embryo, basing his conclusion on the hypothesis that sex depends upon the nutritive superiority of one of the parents. Physiologists have demonstrated, however, that sex is determined at the time of the union of the sperm-cells and is governed by the type of chromosomes in the spermatozoa. There is as yet no possible way to predict the results of such a union.

Whether due to a general diminution in fertility, or to the expansion of the social movement known as birth control, or to other factors, the United States is to-day facing a definite decline in the birth-rate. Concentration in cities tends to reduce birth-rates, for rural peoples are more fertile than urban, and the restriction of immigration, with its former influx of young adults in the prime of life, further tends to lower national fecundity.

Our birth-rate of about 20 births per 1,000 population is only slightly in excess of the death-rate. Many competent statisticians believe that we are approaching a stationary population, with this excess actually lower than it appears and near the vanishing point. Whether such a situation is a good thing is a matter of opinion. But since knowledge of birth control is limiting the number of children in homes where more are not wanted or no provision can be made for them, the promotion of fertility and the prevention of sterility are matters of great national and social significance.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



A Partner for Life

By WALTER GILKYSON

A story of human beings behind the stock ticker in time of stress

HENRY ARMAT, standing in front of the fire, listened to his partner with a feeling of envy and a queer, half-uncomfortable desire to protect him from the too great flame of his enthusiasm. Barklie believed: his dark, thin face burned with intensity, and his fingers roamed nervously through the pockets of his dinner jacket. Such enthusiasm was rare in Philadelphia, and even more rare in a Philadelphia banker. It was the quality in Barklie that especially endeared him to Henry Armat. Old, sceptical and dry, as he dimly pictured himself, he treasured Barklie's courage and daring, curbing it only when necessary, and always believing in it as the ultimate though uncertain guide to their success.

"The market can't possibly break now," Barklie was saying. "We're on the crest of a continuous wave, with business rising steadily under us——"

Henry Armat shook his head.

"Man, look at the earnings of the country for the third quarter of the year!"

"That ended three weeks ago. This is October the twenty-second."

"What's the difference!"

"A lot."

"A very slight falling off—seasonal——"

"Getting ready for Hallowe'en, I suppose." Henry Armat moved his big body away from the fire that was scorching his legs. He looked over at Margaret, Barklie's young wife. She was a blond, tranquil woman with blue eyes and smooth, banded hair. At the moment she was waiting for Barklie to come back with some annihilating retort. That was right. She was quite as she should be. There were times when he felt sure that what she and Barklie and the two children had was worth more than the banking business.

"I hope we aren't all of us being fooled," he said, in his long, slow, even voice with its faint up-state twang. He stepped away from the fire, his heavy legs breaking the line of his trousers grotesquely at the knees. In the wide drawing-room, with its Lorraine engravings and cupboards of fragile china and delicate ramping chairs, he looked rough-hewn and square, as if he belonged to the logs and the stones and the andirons he had just left.

"I must get along, Barklie. If you come back from New York in time I may run up to Lancaster to-morrow night."

"If you do, give my love to your mother." Margaret rose, went over to him, and absent-mindedly picked a thread off his sleeve.

"Thanks," he said. For a moment he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stood there, gathering himself up to go. It was always hard. These two were so pleasant together. He ran his hand over his stiff uncompromising wave of gray hair, and his small steady eyes, half hidden under the flesh above the eyelids, scrutinized Margaret. "Good-bye," he said. He nodded toward Barklie. "Remember, somebody has to keep him down, and I can't do it alone."

"Fortunately not. If I felt the way you do, we'd have to quit banking and get jobs on a Hoover commission." Barklie lifted Henry's coat from the chair and held it for him. "A good fact-finder like you, Henry, can keep himself busy doing nothing for 'a life or lives in being and twenty-one years thereafter.'"

"You think so?" Armat swung slowly around. "I've never known any facts yet to come under your observation, or if they did I've never seen them come out again." He took up his square-topped derby hat, planted it on his head, and then took it off. "Don't lead any riots to-morrow in New York; the city's against them." He buttoned his coat, his large mouth half-smiling as he looked at Barklie. The boy was made up of imagination and nerve. One grain of what lay behind that sensitive, high-strung face could do more than all his own labored prudence.

But without that prudence he would never have become Barklie's partner in the firm of Westermain & Company, he reflected as he drove off toward the Green Hill Farms apartment where he lived. Watching over young Barklie had been old Mr. Barklie Westermain's chief legacy to him, bequeathed by implication very soon after he became an employee of the firm. That was twenty-six years ago now, when he had been twenty-four years old and Barklie had been a youngster of eight: looking back the time seemed short, as indeed it was if you measured it by the age of Westermain & Company. With one exception they were the oldest banking firm in the city of Philadelphia.

"We are really professional men, Mr. Armat," was the phrase with which old Mr. Westermain, Barklie's father, always began his more intimate talks about business. "A doctor studies his medicine, a lawyer studies his law, and we study our economics. In our respective fields we advise our clients to the best of our ability." Invariably after this little speech the old gentleman would lean forward, rest his elbows upon the desk, and fix the young Henry with his candid brown eyes. It was a ceremony that he went through every so often, very solemnly and deliberately, as though he were conveying some object of great value to his young employee. The silence that followed was never embarrassing: Mr. Westermain always made Henry feel that there was a particular reason for talking to him in this way. Once he had spoken of Henry's respect for enduring tradition, and the sense of continuity which he had inherited from three generations of country professional men.

At any rate, just before he died Mr. Westermain had made him a partner in the firm. Once and for all he had gone through the little ceremony, this time with long typewritten sheets of paper before him, and a groping tragic premonition of death in his candid eyes. He was going to turn Westermain & Company over to his son, and to the man whom he trusted as if he were his own flesh and blood. Old men, in a mysterious way which the young partners would learn about all too soon, knew when the end had been reached. But no matter what happened, this unimportant formality they were observing would assure him that Westermain & Company would go on.

It had, and much faster than Mr.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Westermain ever intended. Too fast, possibly, for such a small firm. The number of their participations had increased three-fold—the big houses were fond of young Barklie—and the stock business had grown until the customers' room at two o'clock looked like the auditorium of a moving-picture palace. Besides that they were syndicate managers for a lot of underwritings, in at least five of which they were primarily responsible for the purchase of the stock. It was good business; the country was dripping with money; getting it was as easy as squeezing water out of a sponge. But if the market collapsed, did, say, one of its 1893 turns, he and Barklie would find themselves spread out over less than nothing.

Of course such forebodings were useless and he shouldn't indulge in them; they were the result of age, of the two hours he had spent at Barklie's house, where life had some human warmth, and of his own solitary return to a heavy, barren luxurious existence in an apartment hotel. He looked down the tunnel of trees where the light from the car turned the leaves of the poplars into ghostly fire. Philadelphia wasn't an easy place for a stranger to slap on the back. Nearly all of his fifty years had passed before Philadelphia knew he was alive.

When he awoke in the morning his premonitions of the night before had vanished. Disaster of any kind seemed impossible in the presence of such gay sunlight: the trees at the end of the lawn were emerging in scarlet and yellow from a low-lying veil of blue mist, and in the big dining-room down-stairs the men were seated as usual behind their papers, quite oblivious of the sparkle of sun upon silver and the cool, glittering freshness of the grass outside. Sitting down at his table he leisurely opened the paper and glanced over the headlines. Each day began with such terrible shouts of exultation and exhortation that reading the news became almost riotous.

By nine o'clock he was walking down Walnut Street from the garage to the office of the firm. Even now after three years he never entered the door in the morning without a feeling of quiet pride. It was impersonal; Westermain & Company was an institution, one of the levers by which the machinery of Philadelphia was run. He himself was only a mechanician, but responsible for the right handling of that lever. There was nothing dramatic or fancy about his work; decent banking was a sober, clear-eyed, and unromantic job.

Before long the customers' room was full, as he could see from the crowd standing in the hall outside his door. The Stock Exchange business had never interested him much, and he left its supervision entirely to Barklie, probably, as he reasoned to himself, because three generations of hard-working country doctors had seen to it that he had no gambling blood in his veins. Too many people were trading anyhow; they were trying, poor devils, to achieve some security in a world that was monstrously insecure. Half of that business in there was an attempt at old age insurance, and damned risky as he too well knew.

On the way to lunch he stopped at Mr. Markell's office to see him about taking a part of the Lancaster Chemical Company stock which the firm had just underwritten. Last week, after examining the statement of the company, Mr. Markell had seemed enthusiastic, and enthusiasm in a Markell, as Barklie said, was as unexpected as passion in an oyster. With increasing age and wealth, Mr. Markell had grown weary of common stock and become a collector of old securities.

The collector of old securities was suffering from a slight cold which had reddened the end of his thin, brittle nose

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and moistened his eyes. Crouched behind his desk with the air of a ruffled pelican, he was by no means encouraging either in manner or speech. Quite flatly he refused to take any of the Lancaster Chemical Company stock.

"The statement looks well, yes, but this is no time to buy anything, Mr. Armat."

Henry watched him. There was a prophetic gleam in his watery blue eyes.

"Sixty-Nine, Seventy-Three, Ninety-Three and Nineteen Hundred and Seven." The old gentleman chanted the numbers in a toneless voice, as if he were giving signals to a decrepit football team. "I have gone through too many panics in my time, Mr. Armat, and I've learned that whatever goes up is bound to come down, as we used to say when we were children. I think it's time for stocks to come down."

"You don't believe then in a steady, perpetual growth?"

"No more than I believe in perpetual motion!" Mr. Markell's eyebrows contracted spasmodically above his thin, brittle nose. "Put money in your purse, put money in your purse, Mr. Armat!" he cried in a high peevish voice. "I've watched you; Barklie Westermain thought a great deal of you. Put money in your purse and keep your customers up to the mark on collateral."

"We do," said Henry.

"Yes?" Mr. Markell surveyed him with bright, swimming eyes. Then he leaned confidentially over the desk and whispered, "The Marrins gave an order to-day to sell 60,000 shares of Federal Zinc."

If that were true then it meant something, Henry concluded as he left Mr. Markell's office. But you couldn't tell what to believe in this business; the street was always rustling with rumors, and bankers were the inveterate gossips of the world. If the Marrins had given an order to sell 60,000 shares of Federal Zinc, the transaction would be reflected soon enough in the market. But no matter what the facts were, old Mr. Markell's belief had cost Westermain & Company the use of three hundred thousand dollars.

At the southeast corner of Rittenhouse Square he came upon Jonas Harkimer, the president of the Union National Bank.

"I'm coming over to see you for a minute this afternoon, Mr. Harkimer," he said as they walked up the street, each trying vainly to catch step with the other.

"Ah!" A look of perfunctory pleasure came and as quickly left Mr. Harkimer's solid face. "We are discontinuing our loans in the market," he said in his dry, impassive voice. "At our meeting this morning we decided not to go any farther in that direction."

"This isn't a market loan," said Henry. "We need some money to carry an underwriting for another thirty days."

Mr. Harkimer walked on a few steps in silence. "We have three separate transactions with your firm, involving, if I remember rightly, some twelve hundred thousand dollars. We like to do business with you!" His smile was as swift as the sun over ice. "But I would rather wait until the securities pledged with us are sold before we take up any new business."

"Right," said Henry. "Now we know where we are. But this is the first time, Mr. Harkimer, that your bank has ever refused us a loan."

Mr. Harkimer faced him. "We value your business, and we respect your ability and integrity," he said. "We are simply—" he looked at him with kindly determination, "restricting our loans to the utmost at the present moment."

The wind was changing, Henry said

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to himself as he parted from Mr. Harkimer in the hall of the club. No doubt Barklie at this moment was gathering signs from the sky in New York. If he knew Barklie, he would move heaven and earth to dispose of some of the securities they were carrying.

At the club table no one was carrying any burdens. On the contrary several small fortunes seemed to have been made that morning. This eternal prayer wheel of prosperity was beginning to get on his nerves; he was growing tired of hearing lawyers and doctors and fox-hunting farmers singing hymns of praise to the market. Which one of them, when you came down to it, knew what he was talking about? The boy who shined his shoes before lunch had made fifty dollars on a tip given to him by a retired novelist.

Intermittently through the afternoon's work his mind returned to a possible plan of action in case the market should break. The trouble was that neither he nor any one else knew how bad the break would be if it came, or how long it would last, so that what he planned now could be nothing more than a guess. So far there was no need of guessing; the market hadn't changed, and one of the salesmen had just sold the Schuylkill Life Insurance Company five thousand shares of Northern Liberties preferred. Barklie was a director of the Schuylkill Life, but that didn't make the preferred stock any the worse. As a matter of fact it was time the Schuylkill Life bought something from Westermain & Company. He and Barklie were both insured in the company for a million dollars each.

When Barklie returned to the office at seven o'clock he came directly into Henry's room. Throwing his brief case down on the desk, he dropped into a chair and looked at his partner without speaking.

"What did Van Zandt & Levine say?" Henry asked finally.

"Nothing." Barklie's frown was impatient. "They're scared. Every one in New York is scared. They think something's going to happen."

"What, for instance?"

"Well, they don't know." He jerked his head to one side with a gesture of irritation. "They ought to have blinders on. I haven't talked to one rational, intelligent man the whole day."

"You couldn't sell anything?"

"Not a share."

Henry nodded. A faint cold wind stirred about his heart, and he drew a long breath. Unconsciously he glanced through the glass partition at his right, as if expecting to see Mr. Westermain's head bending over the green lamp-lit blotter on the desk. It was dark. Not even the shadow of a presence moved in the room.

"Did you hear anything about a Marrin sale?"

"Yes," Barklie answered shortly. "The Marrins are selling out."

"I wonder."

"They're all wondering." Barklie rose, his face distorted with perplexity and annoyance. "New York is filled with little wonder children and they make me tired."

When he awoke the next morning Henry felt as if something had happened. Then he remembered. He was afraid of what might happen, which was altogether different. Such fear was absurd and grotesque, because disaster didn't come to a man as prosaic and settled as himself. Closing the window he opened the living-room door to let in the heat. If disaster should come—he smiled grimly as he turned on the cold water faucet of the shower—the firm of Westermain & Company would find a way out.

Barklie had gone to New York when

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he reached the office, so he sat down for a moment at Barklie's desk to look over some papers. While he was there Mr. Prendergast the cashier put his head in the door.

"The Philadelphia Central called up this morning about their note."

Henry pinched his chin and the wrinkles deepened on his forehead.

"Tell them we'll take care of it tomorrow."

"Very well." There was reproach in Mr. Prendergast's voice, and reproach in his mournful, sallow face. He was a living monument to caution, and very depressing to both Barklie and Henry.

On his return to his own office he found five people waiting to see him, three of whom had come to beg off on putting up more collateral. That was the unpleasant part of the business, and one which Barklie when he was in the office always handled. If the firm's advice to a customer proved bad Henry felt responsible, and if as occasionally happened the customer was cleaned out, he felt like a criminal.

"That one's broke," he said to himself bitterly, as he watched the last man sledging with a blind aimlessness toward the door.

It was five minutes of ten, and this was the third time he'd looked at his watch. If only the customers didn't crowd so cheerfully into the hall, if they weren't so blatantly sure they were going to make money! Millions of dollars' worth of stock pledged and repledged and pledged again! It was all legal; Westermain & Company had the right to repledge the securities that were pledged with them. But the web that they wove was wide-spread and tenuous, and one break in it was enough to sink them both.

It was ten o'clock. Henry Armat rose and crossed the hall to the open door of the customers' room. Every one was quiet. The show was beginning. An old man near the door was staring at the Translux with his mouth open. The numbers appeared magically on the screen, coming out of nowhere. A sigh, a quick tremor, then a rustle of excitement ran through the room. One of the women cried out as if she'd been hurt. A man jumped up quickly and ran back to the door.

Henry Armat kept his eyes fixed steadily on the numbers.

In the cold hard light of his mind he was building, destroying, and rebuilding his defense.

The market had broken and broken badly.

All through the day it zigzagged to lower and lower depths. In the rare moments when he caught sight of himself he had the grim vision of a butcher seated at a mahogany desk and slaughtering men and women. And meeting blows; suave deadly blows that came over the telephone. Once Barklie called. His voice was quivering and sharp. Hell had broken lose in New York and he wouldn't be over until late. Had the banks called their loans? When Henry answered "Yes" there was a long silence. "My stuff goes into the firm to-morrow," Barklie said, and when Henry told him he had put in his own, Barklie simply answered, "Good boy," and then rang off.

Through the maze of confusion at the end of the day Henry could only discern one fact—that the firm was insolvent. It might be temporary; if the market went back in a few days they could probably climb out. If not, they and the customers would go under.

He worked until eleven o'clock, hoping that Barklie would return on the nine-o'clock train. He might have something encouraging to say. Just now his empty office, with the bars of iron dimly outlined against the pale oblong of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

windows, looked more desolate than a tomb. If there were only a light above the desk! If for one moment he could see Barklie's father moving in his slow, contented way about the room.

He bent his head and his great hands tightened on the edge of the desk. "No matter what happens to me, I shall know that the firm of Westermain & Company will go on." It would. The heritage of men who had laughed at labor and bone-drenching cold and sleepless nights rose up in him to match the tradition of a hundred years. It would. He would see to it that Westermain & Company went on.

When he came down-stairs the next morning Barklie was waiting for him in the dining-room.

"Midnight train?" Henry asked. "I stayed at the office until three o'clock."

"Yes, but we didn't get in until nearly four." Barklie sat down in the opposite chair. He was shaved and neat, but there were dark smudges under his eyes. He picked up the paper, studied the headlines as if he couldn't read, and then threw the paper down.

"Are we broke?"

"By no means; we're suffering from a temporary embarrassment, that's all."

Barklie smiled. The nervous twitching above his eyes, outgrown years ago, had come back. "All the banks call?"

"In a chorus."

"Any of them foreclose?"

"Not yet. No one's had any time yet to do anything but howl." Henry opened his first egg and then cracked the shell of the second.

"God, I don't see how you can eat so much!" Barklie cried.

"Is that too much?" Henry looked down with surprise at his eggs. "I've always eaten two eggs," he said slowly. "We've got to do business as usual, Barklie."

"All right, but for God's sake let's get down to the office!"

"In a minute." He'd have to be gentle with Barklie because he was suffering. That slow backward movement of his head was an escape from pain.

All the morning Henry Armat tried to get money. There was none; money had disappeared. Even the banks were trying to find it and they didn't care how.

"We can let matters go as they are until the close of business on Tuesday," Mr. Harkimer told him. "If your loans are not paid then, we shall have to foreclose." He glanced down the columned hall, past the uniformed guards to the doorway, through which figures were incessantly passing from sunlight into gloom. "You are doing the same thing yourselves," he said. His honest elderly face was sardonic and sad. "I don't doubt you've cut off plenty of heads this morning."

"That's what Barklie's doing," said Henry. "It's dog eat dog, isn't it?"

Mr. Harkimer winced, then looked away. "Yes," he said, "it's dog eat dog."

The sunlight outside was sharp and metallic, and the buildings on the other side of the street rose in a rocky wall across the sky. Stone and sunlight and faces; they were all barren. The city was barren. Between the rocks small anxious animals were scurrying to and fro.

Dog eat dog. The animals were trying to find food. He was one of them; thrusting about here, there, and everywhere, with a swollen tongue. It was ugly. As obscene as death. And yet, together, they had brought it on themselves.

A few steps from the office he met Jerry Sandin. Jerry was cheerful; bankruptcy was no new thing to him.

"Well, well!" he said in his loud meaningless voice, "we're all in a hell of a fix this morning, aren't we?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I don't know," said Henry, edging away. "We're coming along all right."

"You are!" Jerry laughed sceptically. "Well, most of the boys are worth more dead than alive this morning."

That was a true but disgusting observation, Henry decided as he walked away. It showed Jerry's lack of imagination; he could turn a man into insurance money without seeing him dead.

Not until late in the afternoon did Henry have a chance to talk with Barklie alone, and then neither one of them had much to say; the mere sight of Barklie, seated at old Mr. Westermain's desk with that look of haggard pain on his face, was enough to silence Henry. The ghost had returned to the office, but what a pitiful, heart-breaking ghost! The portraits of the preceding Westermains looked down on Barklie's head as if wondering what their tortured survivor could do to save himself.

"I'm glad father died, because this business would have killed him."

That was treason; Barklie was betraying his father, but Barklie was a sick man.

"We'll get through all right." The long, slow, even voice carried conviction. "We have until Wednesday morning, and we'll get through."

"How?" Barklie flung out his arm in a queer, loose-jointed way, and then let it drop. The dark smudges under his eyes had spread to the corners, and his eyes were preternaturally bright. He's desperate. I've got to watch him. Jerry Sandin's observation that morning slipped coldly into Henry's mind. Not Barklie! He repulsed the thought. But he'd have to watch him.

"One hundred years are as but a day," Barklie muttered. "I can't face bankruptcy, Henry. Not—" he lifted his head, "—with all that behind me."

"All the more reason——"

"And jail."

"No," said Henry shortly, "that's nonsense. No matter what happens no one can put us in jail."

Barklie stared at him, smiling unpleasantly.

"Stop it!" cried Henry. He rose, spread his great arms out, and clutched both sides of the desk. "My God, but you make me mad when you talk that way! You know damn well that everything in this firm is straight, and always has been. You talk like a neurasthenic out of a hospital."

Barklie glanced down. "You're right," he said quietly. "I'm losing my nerve. But they try." He looked up appealingly at Henry. "When you fail they always try."

"Well, we won't fail! Look at here—" Henry beat the desk with his fist, "I tell you now, face to face, we won't fail!"

Barklie nodded. "You know I believe you, Henry." He rose and came over to where Henry was standing. "It's a family habit to believe you and I've inherited the habit. I don't see how in God's name you can do it, but I believe you."

That belief of Barklie's weighed heavier and heavier upon Henry Armat's shoulders as the next three days passed. It was a burden under which he staggered in lonely, silent, and increasing despair. And when the market broke again on Tuesday he felt as if some blind force were deliberately striking him down. This was the bottom. The very power of resistance had been torn from his body. All day he worked and trudged the streets and worked, an empty shell in which one livid spot was alive.

More than anything else he dreaded Barklie's return from New York.

At four o'clock in the afternoon Barklie called. His voice on the telephone was quiet, ominously quiet. There was nothing they could do, he supposed, but make an assignment. Yes, that was all, Henry said. The words echoed in his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ears with the finality of earth dropping into a grave. It was the first time he had ever admitted the end of Westermain & Company. When Barklie told him he would be over on the four-o'clock train he hung up without answering. There was nothing more he could do. Only stand up and face dishonor, see Barklie disgraced and the customers ruined, and hear for the rest of his life the voice of old Mr. Westermain saying: "No matter what happens to me I shall know that the firm of Westermain & Company will go on."

That at least would take courage. There was a dumb bravery in keeping on, even after the purpose of life had gone. Such bravery was built on the hope that hope would come again, but for him the thing was impossible; his procession of days had marched inevitably toward one end, and now that the end was gone there was no future toward which he could go.

Except one, which turned a blind, stony face toward him with a sombre appeal. There was no reason for shrinking away from it as a cowardly act. It required courage too. It was a last supreme acknowledgment of failure in life. It was final, indelible, and everlasting. Accident, disgrace, and shame were swallowed up in that one complete act of degradation.

His policy of life insurance was more than three years old, and therefore payable in the event of suicide.

By killing himself he could make it certain that the firm of Westermain & Company would go on.

He turned on the light and tried to get back to work. The silence in the building disturbed him; the hushed, slow-footed pace of the employees in the hall outside was ominous; they were treading softly upon disaster. The idea kept returning, looking up with its blind, stony face from the typewritten pages he was reading. It was charged now with a terrible question. Was it his duty—his duty—the word burned in front of his eyes—to destroy himself for the firm?

Personal disgrace was a foul and shameful thing. All his life he had tried to be decent. To hurl himself blindly into the mud, to die there, his eyes and mouth stopped with filth, was more than he could do. If he could only die decently! Get knocked off quickly by a car! For one instant he felt the divine relief of nothingness, the eternal extinction of all effort and pain.

Rising abruptly he put on his hat and coat and went into the street. Somewhere—somehow—he must decide this thing. Look at it just as he looked at a statement. He shut his teeth tight. No more statements. Statements in bankruptcy. Questions by smooth insulting lawyers. Disgrace—disgrace either way.

If he could only go into that church and kneel down and ask for help. But there was no use in praying. God, if there was one, made you work things out yourself. He could no more put this up to God than he could put it up to one of the passers-by on the street.

It was late when he returned. The agony of indecision had paralyzed his mind, and he felt himself walking, passing people, turning in the door, as if he were isolated by the glare of an incandescent pain. He saw the doorman's lips move, then heard his voice far away.

"No use in keeping open any longer, Martin. You can put out the lights."

The man saluted.

Poor devil, at least his wages would be a preferred claim.

There was a light in Barklie's room. As he approached, Henry Armat's feet dragged and he leaned up against the partition outside the door. To go in there and face Barklie was the last turn of the screw.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Slowly he pulled himself up. No one, not even Barklie, would ever see him down. Not Barklie, or old Mr. Westermain, or the creditors— He straightened his shoulders, ran his hand through his uncompromising wave of gray hair, and opened Barklie's door.

For an instant he paused. Then he flung himself at the desk, crashing into the lamp, and driving a black wave of ink up into the air. He sprawled out, clear of the floor, with one hand on Barklie's collar and the other around his wrist. He turned the wrist savagely, without caring whether he broke it or not, and Barklie cried out, struck him full in the face with his left fist. Then he sank back in the chair, and his right hand curled up against Henry's fingers.

Henry heard the muffled sound of a small, hard object striking the rug. Still holding Barklie he slid around the desk. Then he leaned down, picked up the pistol, and put it into his pocket.

"I'm sorry I had to be so rough," he said, "but I can't let you do anything like that."

Barklie stared at him with a dazed, sleepy fury, as if he'd been suddenly thrown out of bed. He ran his tongue over his lips, and his black eyebrows and the wings of his nostrils twitched fantastically. He was galvanized; a grimacing, grinning, insensate face.

"Take it easy," said Henry. He moved around to the other side of the desk and sat down. "Everything's all right," he said. "I fixed it all up this afternoon."

Barklie examined his wrist. The corners of his mouth jerked up and down as if he were getting something out from between his teeth.

"You ought to remember Margaret and the children," Henry said. "You can't just step off that way and leave them."

Barklie looked up, the hope struggling pitifully in his face.

"Is it all right?"

"Sure." Henry rose and leaned over the desk. "Didn't I tell you right here last Friday afternoon that we weren't going to fail?"

"Yes," said Barklie. He caught his lower lip sharply between his teeth. "But I thought we were all done this afternoon."

"Never!" Henry went around to the chair, put his hand on Barklie's shoulder, and looked down in his face. "My God, Barklie, haven't you got any confidence in me?"

Barklie smiled faintly. "I ought to," he said. "You've just saved my life."

"Yes, and you've put me to a lot of trouble doing it, too." Henry held out his black, glistening cuffs. "I knocked hell out of that ink. Come along now and get something to eat and we'll go home."

Sitting opposite Barklie in the small restaurant, Henry told him the story of the firm's unexpected salvation. He was easy to fool, quite ready to believe that the Union National Bank had agreed at the last moment to extend the notes of the firm for another ninety days. So ready that Henry Armat felt a cold disgust at his own facility for lying. It was part of the ribald and meaningless obscenity of the situation, that he should have to leave Barklie with a lie on his lips. There was no honor in what he was doing; it was only a dirty job that had to be finished as soon as possible.

When dinner was over he took Barklie out in his car, past the museum and through the rolling lamp-lit gloom of the park. There were lamps along the bank of the river below, and up the valley the glow of the mills spread like northern lights across the sky. As a boy he had seen those lights. A boy who had dreamed and wondered about the world in his quiet way. It had seemed a good place then, a place where you earned

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

love, and the pride of accomplishment, and the esteem of men, if you worked hard and behaved decently. But that wasn't true. There was no use in complaining, but it wasn't true.

The smell of the burning leaves pervaded him in sharp, agonizing waves of homesickness. He wanted to see his mother again, and the house, with its smell of old wall-paper and dusty velvet on the claw-footed chairs, and hear the slow, golden notes of the clock falling through sunlight that hovered in dust-laden silence above the rug. She was old. This would hurt her terribly. But Margaret would make her understand.

"I'll stop in for a minute," he said when they reached Barklie's house. It would be easier if he saw Margaret again. She and Barklie and the children were a part of his justification.

She came out of the drawing-room as Barklie closed the front door.

"I was worried about you; I thought you'd be home to dinner."

"I kept him in town." Margaret was upset and he took her by the arm as they walked toward the drawing-room. When Barklie went out to get the drinks, Henry turned around from the fire and faced her.

"Margaret, you watch him," he said.

"I do." Her voice quivered with determination and fear. "Every moment he's home I watch him. Last night he got up—" The muscles in her neck tightened and she looked away. "I reached him just in time."

Henry nodded. "Watch him to-night," he said. "We're out of the woods and I told him so, but he may forget it."

"What do you mean, out of the woods?"

"Just that. To-morrow we'll have all the money we need."

"Really?" The sight of her face made him feel that what he had to do was done. For a moment he had come alive again and was happy.

"Did you do that—to-day?"

"Yes."

She came over to him, reached up, and put her arms around his neck. "Henry, I knew you'd fix it up somehow. I'm foolish." A bright tear ran down her cheek. "I'm foolish, but I knew you'd fix it somehow."

"Hey, what are you doing? Kissing my wife?" Barklie called from the doorway.

"Why shouldn't he?" Margaret kissed Henry deliberately on the cheek. "I knew, Barklie, I just knew we'd come out all right!"

"Well, we'll take a drink on it," said Barklie. He poured out the whiskey and White Rock and then held up his glass.

"To the firm of Westermain & Company," he said.

Henry lifted his glass. "No matter what happens to me I shall know that the firm of Westermain & Company will go on." In the fire-lit room, behind Barklie and Margaret, he could hear that voice, and see the tragic premonition of death in those candid brown eyes. Unconsciously he lifted his glass a little higher, looking beyond Barklie and Margaret through empty space.

"To the firm of Westermain & Company," he said.

It was cold outside, and he found himself shivering as he drove the car. There was no place to go. It didn't make any difference where he went now. Just so they found him early enough in the morning.

If he could only stop shivering! It was a pity to discover so late that he was afraid to die. But death when you came up to it was more than a blank. It was a loathsome, corrupting force.

He was on the Montgomery Pike, passing cars that flew by like scattered motes of life. The fear suffocated him;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it was more than fear; his mind and body rebelled, protested, struggled madly against this cold reaching out for death. Far away he watched the struggle, carrying it on in one long flash of imagination to the appointed end. In spite of this unexpected and unseemly rebellion, he would be dead in another ten minutes.

A sudden fear assailed him that Barklie might have done it himself. Grimly he smiled: that was the last struggle to escape. Better quiet this clamor and then get along. Stopping at the next filling-station he climbed down from the car and walked into the telephone booth.

Margaret answered. Barklie had gone to bed. He was cheerful and there was no more danger.

"Good-bye."

He clung to the receiver as if he were holding her voice.

Then he went back to the car, drove up to the top of the hill, and stopped in the sand at the side of the road. Below him were the scattered lights of houses, and in the sky was an icy multitude of stars.

Taking out Barklie's pistol, he put the barrel carefully into his mouth, bit down on it, and then pulled the trigger.

To a Friend Grown Respectable

By Conrad Aiken

Good virtuous son, adviser to the poor,
Getter of children on your father's dower,
Usher at weddings and at churches too,
Chairman of clubs, and Madam here's your pew;
Uxorious, simple, sensuous, and impassioned,—
Rebel for once, when drunk, but now old-fashioned;
Remember how you took the harlot's hand,
And saw, one instant, hell's dark hinterland.

All's relative: the slow at last make haste:
Rash friends of rebel days have gone to waste;
Blackballed by clubs in which your voice is power,
And cut down like the clover in its hour.
While you, from state to state, move on in pride
With your lubricious Madam at your side;
Upright and right, and freshly bathed, and pure;
Insurance paid, and god outside your door.

Remember that fierce atom in your blood,
Which bade you stand in hell, where once you stood;
Remember the good friend who stands there still,
And thinks of you, and smiles, and thinks no ill.
Let that dark flame come once again, between
Hypocrisy and hell's bright sabbath-green;
There we will dance once more, and in our hour
Worship the god who honors our poor floor.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As I Like It

By WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

THE education of the younger generation, while to the majority of Americans it does not seem either so important or so interesting as Prohibition, is nevertheless a matter of some concern.

Leaving out all technical works on the subject, none of which I have read, there are some recent books of a provocative or of a confessional nature, which demand consideration.

"Universities — American, English, German," by Abraham Flexner, being an expansion of three lectures given at Oxford in 1928, has 179 pages (mainly of condemnation) devoted to America, 81 pages (mainly laudatory) devoted to England, and 56 pages (almost entirely laudatory) devoted to Germany. There is an excellent and interesting introduction of 33 pages, on "The Idea of a Modern University."

This is a book that should be read by intelligent Americans, especially those in any way professionally associated with colleges and universities; it will hurt their feelings but not their minds. Our schools, in fact all our institutions, need constant adverse criticism, and perhaps the more severe it is, the more profitable it may be. And it is a book that I wish no foreigner would read; foreigners already believe our business men are all Babbitts and our small towns all Main Streets. Mr. Flexner will make most of them believe that our representative American universities are chiefly engaged in the promulgation of the cheapest form of vulgarities. Every man who hates America will love this book.

When we consider that it has not yet occurred to any of the numerous foreign lecturers who come annually to the United States, to hold up for our mirth and scorn the leading institutions of their native lands, it is with unusual interest that we find in this book an American lecturer representing to a foreign audience in a foreign country the universities of America as ridiculous and contemptible.

It is true that Mr. Flexner makes certain exceptions; he says there are some individual scholars on university faculties and that there are courses where the student may obtain, in the best sense of the word, an education. But to distant readers who have no knowledge of actual conditions, Columbia University and the University of Chicago will seem different from what they are.

The University of Michigan, one of the first State universities to attract favorable international recognition, and whose faculty has contributed many high-grade scholars and teachers to other institutions of advanced learning, receives in this work of 381 pages, the following consideration:

> "The University of Michigan has set up a professorship of bio-linguistics." P. 72.
>
> "The Ann Arbor *Daily News* (August 25, 1930) announces that the University of Michigan is about to offer 'correspondence courses patterned after the Columbia plan.'" P. 148, note.

In a certain sense the manner of this book resembles the methods of attracting attention for which it condemns Columbia and Chicago; for it is written in the shrewdest and most adroit style of modern advertising; sensational features are emphasized and the others

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lightly touched. The main difference is that it advertises faults instead of virtues (in America).

There is not a dull page; seldom have I seen a more clever or a more diverting book. Harry Hansen, an extract from whose review in the New York *World* is quoted among the puffs on the jacket, says that Mr. Flexner has done "a better job as entertainer than Bob Benchley, Cary (*sic*) Ford and Chic Sale have in many a day."

Professor Charles A. Beard, for whom I have profound respect, remarks (also on the jacket): "Unless some things are said in words as hard as cannon balls, they will pass unnoticed in this age of hurry."

Precisely so; any advertising writer will tell you that.

Well, is every one mentioned in the American chapters a villain? No, the hero of the book is Daniel C. Gilman, and a hero he certainly was. I had the honor of knowing him well; he was a graduate of Yale, and always spoke (to me) of Yale with affection. Mr. Flexner says, Gilman "resigned the librarianship of Yale University, because he could not obtain an assistant and had himself to light the fire in the stove every morning."

Although not so tragic a martyr as Latimer and Ridley, he lighted more fires than that.

In the discussion of German universities, there seems to be no over-emphasis on duelling, or on the many "students" who do no studying. It is true, though not mentioned in this book, that at some German universities, it is easier for an American to get a Ph.D. than it is at Yale or Harvard and some other universities in America. It is also true that many printed theses in English literature, written at German universities by German recipients of the doctor's degree, are slight in content and unimportant.

The *Seminar* is rightly praised; it is the best method of instruction in graduate schools, and it had its origin in Germany. But every American university of good standing has employed it for many years.

I agree fervently with Mr. Flexner that the main business of a university is to further the pursuit of knowledge; to inculcate a love of truth, regardless of its applied values or of whither it may lead. But were German universities, in the nineteenth or in the twentieth centuries, superior in these respects to the American?

I find it distasteful to point out objectionable features in the universities of any foreign country, but when I see in this book German universities portrayed as so very superior to our own, I think it may not be impertinent to consider a few facts.

In the forties, Schopenhauer, the most influential German philosopher since Kant, attacked the German universities with a fury of invective that makes Mr. Flexner's remarks on Columbia seem mild; and toward the end of that century and up to 1918, the German universities subordinated the love of truth to the passion of patriotism. There was one thing that always came before truth —the State. I remember in 1911, at the one hundredth anniversary of the University of Christiania, hearing a German professor solemnly quote and indorse John Stuart Mill's saying that a man whose love of truth did not exceed his fear of consequences had no business to be a university professor. I think he had in mind religion, which any one may attack with impunity.

But in 1914! was there ever a more striking instance of the "lockstep"—the favorite cant epithet to describe any concerted movement the describer happens to dislike—than the manner in which these professorial searchers after truth

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(regardless of consequences) fell into step behind the declarations of war? A German professor of exactly the stamp most approved by Mr. Flexner wrote me that he would shed every drop of his blood rather than surrender one inch of Alsace or Lorraine; he is still living, I am glad to say, for he is a fine scholar. Another German professor, an authority in a remote and lonely field of pure learning, wrote me in the autumn of 1914, "We are beating France and Russia; and then I hope we shall have a bloody reckoning (*blutige Rechnung*) with England!" This shows how sentimental Nationalism can overwhelm reason in a scholarly mind. "Let us test the truth and our own selves," said Socrates. A system of education, like any other system, must be judged by its fruits. Is there any other country in history where scholarship was subordinated to the ideal of the State as it was in Germany?

Let no one think I am waving a bloody shirt, or that I have any hatred for Germany. After considerable experience in foreign countries, I will say that if I could not live in the United States, I had rather live in Munich than anywhere else in the world.

And now that I have relieved my mind by a few remarks, let me repeat that I believe Americans ought to profit a great deal by this violent book.

There are two ways in which one may meet a reproof, an insult, a misrepresentation, a caricature. The victim may fly into a rage, hotly deny every accusation, hurl insults back at their source, OR—however unpalatable the indictment may be, he can give it thoughtful and dispassionate consideration, asking himself why the attack was made, and trying to see if there is not some ground for it. Rage and resentment lead to nothing good; an honest heart-searching may turn an accusation into a means of grace.

American universities, in their laudable endeavor to be of "service," have gone to such lengths of specific instruction in various details, some of which bear no relation to learning or scholarship, that they are—every one of them—in danger of forgetting the particular thing which should be their distinction. Universities, like monasteries, are in the world but they should not be of the world. They serve an ideal which the world never has understood and can never understand—pure learning, without any regard to its practical value. So far as teaching students is concerned, the main purpose should be the enrichment, the strengthening, the development, the elevation of the mind by serious studies, rather than the crowding of the mind by information, or showing students how to "do things" which any educated man can learn for and by himself. Education and not instruction is the true aim; and in this, most American professors will agree heartily with Mr. Flexner, and will be glad that he has put particular emphasis where it belongs.

The president of a university should be a scholar rather than a business man; because it is easier for a scholar to master the details of academic business management than it is for a business man to master academic scholarship.

This does not mean that I believe scholars to be superior to business men; all I mean is they have a different kind of work, that must be learned in a different way. It is easy enough for sheltered academic scholars to sneer at those who provide the shelter. No university, no matter how austere its aim, could exist five minutes without the aid of business men. For clergymen do not build churches; physicians do not build hospitals; research scholars in chemistry do not build laboratories; professors do not build libraries or classrooms. All these edifices and tools are provided by business men who believe in professional

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

men without wishing to imitate them.

A fine book on undergraduate education which would not interest Mr. Flexner, but which after all deals in a practical way with practical problems, is "Life at College," by Christian Gauss, the Dean of the College at Princeton. The American College Dean is a Guardian, a Counsellor, a Friend, a Policeman, and an Executioner. Possibly Mr. Flexner would abolish all disciplinary Deans and Deaneries and all discipline; he would say the undergraduates receive too much personal care, too much nursing; they will develop better if let alone. The strong ones (fittest to survive) will take care of themselves, and the others may go to perdition by whatever happens to be their chosen route.

As the German professor said to President Hadley, "Your students are in dormitories; our students are dissipated all over the town."

It so happens, that leaving out the graduate and professional schools, innumerable boys and girls enter American colleges at the age of seventeen or eighteen; curiously enough, their parents are not only financially interested in them as an investment, they have a real interest in their physical, mental, and spiritual welfare. Most deans and some teachers feel a sense of responsibility to parents, a desire not to take money on false pretenses. Until the time comes when boys and girls of seventeen are naturally ardent in the pursuit of learning, prefer work to play, regard distinction in studies as more delightful than distinction in anything else, and really love a righteous, sober, and godly life, deans and discipline will be useful. Colleges need deans as a city needs policemen; even a monastery has an abbot or something of the kind. Continental universities are apparently the only organizations in the world where the largest part of the population require neither supervision nor restraint. This is the only Utopia.

Even in Oxford and Cambridge, where the student shows his maturity by "taking the initiative," he seems to show his immaturity by not being allowed outdoors late in the evening. American students, according to Mr. Flexner, are spoon-fed in the classroom by day nurses; English students have proctors who are night nurses. American boys and girls, like other boys and girls, are exactly what they are, and it doth not yet appear what they shall be. The alumni should not determine the course of study; but if a college feels no responsibility for the care of the student, then the alumni should be so informed, so that their children may go elsewhither.

In reading Mr. Gauss's admirable book, one will learn nothing about the curriculum, except the ingenious methods by which many of the students succeed in avoiding it. But one will learn much on the principal subject of all the literature of the world—human nature. This book is as sprightly and entertaining as that by Mr. Flexner; and as full of "cases." The interesting thing is that Mr. Gauss, like every college dean I have known, and despite his seeing more of the "bad" students than of the good, is an optimist. He loves his scapegraces, and I imagine he has learned much from them.

Fathers and mothers come in for rough treatment. He tells us that when Woodrow Wilson was president of Princeton, and fearfully busy on the first day of the term, he was annoyed by an anxious mother who wished to know how her boy would get on. The president replied, "Madam, we guarantee satisfaction, or we return the boy."

While I believe that as a rule the best students come from the best homes and from the best parents, I do not think we can blame every father or mother when

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a youth goes wrong. Some of the young men know what they are doing.

Dean Gauss is an optimist presumably because, although the majority of undergraduates never develop later into great research scholars, the majority of them do become good men—intelligent, able, useful members of their communities. The American undergraduate college is not a centre of learning, even though many of the teachers are learned men; but it is a school of character.

Perhaps an ideal that might best combine the ideal of Mr. Flexner, and the ideal of Mr. Gauss, is what Sir James Barrie says the ideal of the Scottish universities used to be, and which he hopes they will not permanently lose. Here is a paragraph from his inaugural address as chancellor of Edinburgh University, in 1930. Speaking of the value of education, he said:

> Since the war various nations have wakened to its being the one way out; they know its value so well that perhaps the only safe boast left to us is that we knew it first. They seem, however, to be setting about the work with ultimate objects that are not ours. Their student from his earliest age is being brought up to absorb the ideas of his political rulers. That is the all of his education, not merely in his academic studies but in all his social life, all his mind, all his relaxations; they are in control from his birth, and he is to emerge into citizenship with rigid convictions which it is trusted will last his lifetime. . . . Nothing can depart more from the Scottish idea, which I take to be to educate our men and women primarily not for their country's good but for their own, not so much to teach them what to think as how to think, not preparing them to give as little trouble as possible in the future but sending them into it in the hope that they will give trouble.

A new book on Russia, one of a quite different character from any other, and one whose testimony is reliable, is "These Russians," by William C. White (Princeton, 1923). Mr. White learned Russian so that he speaks and understands it easily. He lived in Moscow for more than two years. Instead of making generalizations, considering the five-year period, the Communistic experiment, or the Soviet State, he gives us seventeen chapters, each one dealing with an *individual Russian*—the housewife, the professor, the engineer, the village priest, the typist, the barber, the innkeeper, the soldier, the music teacher, the village judge, etc. Never have I seen a more valuable, or more trustworthy case-book; and in every instance it is not the "type" which is described, but the individual, the personality. In these vivacious pages we get very close to the Russia of to-day.

One of the happiest men in the world is the successful playwright, Owen Davis. The title of his autobiography is "I'd Like to Do It Again." Although a champion short-distance runner when he was a Harvard undergraduate, many of his plays have had very long runs. He was a student at Harvard when I was an instructor there, but neither of us remembers the other. This happy-hearted book is as exciting and as entertaining as any one of his numerous melodramas. Alexander Woollcott never forgave me for being chairman of the committee that awarded the Pulitzer Prize to Owen Davis for his drama, "Icebound"; nor did he ever forgive Owen Davis for writing it. It is a good play, though not so continuously interesting as his latest work, this autobiography.

Some time I might start a new club, called the Benjamin Franklin Club. Franklin said he would be glad to live his life over again, even if he were not permitted to change anything in it. Owen Davis would be a charter member.

The F. Q. Club steadily increases its membership, and if there are any of my

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

readers who are tired of hearing it mentioned, I advise them to qualify for membership by reading the poem. *Venienti occurrite morbo!*

Joseph W. Fosa of State College, Pa., read the entire poem in the spring of 1909 when a sophomore in the Middletown, Conn., High School. He did not discover that he had done anything remarkable until he read SCRIBNER'S. The answer is obvious; one should read both SCRIBNER'S and the F. Q. Miss Lida B. Silver, a teacher in the high school at Livingston, Calif., informs me that one of her honor pupils, Frances Christensen, sixteen years old, who reads and appreciates good literature, qualified in 1930.

It is a good thing to fill the mind with great literature when one is young, thus forming a reservoir from which to draw in later years. I remember the Reverend Harry P. Nichols telling us undergraduates in 1884, that he had had a free year for general reading when he was young; that it had been of enormous benefit to him in his life as a clergyman; that he had never had time to add much to the reservoir; and that he had nearly reached the bottom of it. He told us to make sure of having a well-filled reservoir before entering on any professional career. At the time he seemed to me a middle-aged man, but he must have been young, for he is very much alive to-day.

There would not be room to print the comments, favorable and unfavorable, that my list of the one hundred best novels awakened all over the world. David Bevan, a graduate of Cambridge, and now teaching in "The Schools" at Shrewsbury, England, writes:

I saw with pleasure your choice of "The Bride of Lammermoor." Last holidays I was walking in the neighbourhood of Fast Castle and read the story more or less on the spot. It impressed me more than any other of Scott's novels. And in particular I thought that Chapter 33 was as thrilling and splendidly written a piece of prose as I had met with for a long while.

Well, many years ago Sir William Fraser was talking with Bulwer-Lytton about Scott. Sir William suggested that both of them should write on a slip of paper what they thought was the best novel, adding that he was certain they would agree. They did: when the votes were compared, both had written "The Bride of Lammermoor."

And here is a brave letter from Adam Pearson, who took the unusual degree of D.C.L. at Yale in 1896. I call it a brave letter, for he is an invalid, and this is the fourth time in the last three years that he has attempted to write. To make this difficult effort in pain and sickness in order to register a vote on Scott, is one more illustration of how earnestly men and women regard "mere literature."

Amongst the works my sister has read to me were the books of Sir W. Scott. Of them all I was most pleased with "The Fortunes of Nigel." Both the plot and historical incidents pleased me. I wonder if you would be so kind as to tell me why critics do not mention this as the best of Scott's works?

There are plenty of newly born critics who sneer at Scott because they have not read him. But such letters as the two quoted show that Scott is not yet dead. Every reader has his favorite. Mark Twain said that "Quentin Durward" was so good he did not believe Scott wrote it. Mark was impatient with Scott's careless style.

Gertrude M. Cannon of Augusta, Maine, makes a nomination for the Ignoble Prize.

Your humanity toward tired, overworked words, expressed in this month's SCRIBNER'S, gives me courage to nominate for the ignoblest of all ignoble prizes the uses of the word

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gesture! Nobody acts, or performs, or does a thing any more. Everybody makes *gestures*. Dealing a bridge hand or selling all your goods and giving it to the poor are *gestures*. For months, running, now, into years, in every magazine, in editorials, novels, essays, biography, travels, mystery stories—even sermons—I've stumbled over this word until my mentality is black and blue. They may be a certain catholicity about my taste in literature, but my standard is high. In other words the offenders are old enough (meaning wise enough) to know better.

Mrs. John Davison Lawson, of Columbus, Mo., writes:

It was with gratification that I noticed in a recent perusal of your columns—As I Like It—that you disapprove of the use of the word "gotten." I remember many years ago that William Dean Howells scorned the word, and being an ardent admirer of that critic of our language, I have ever since avoided it.

Mrs. Emma Mayhew Whiting of Martha's Vineyard tells me of a word which I have never heard before, but which is in good and regular standing at Martha's Vineyard. Can any one give me any information about it? The word is *pinkletink*.

. . . It is as you see a perfectly good onomatopoetic word for the piping frogs of spring and it quite spoils their plaintive music to hear them called peepers instead of pinkletinks. I am really interested to know if we are the only locality to whom the word is a common one. I do not find it in the dictionary although how Noah Webster could have skipped it I do not see!

My other query is regarding the correct abbreviation for North Easter. Down here we always say "No'theaster," and I think that is the euphonious and correct form but every once in a while I come across "Nor'easter."

Some time ago, in a public address, I made the error of confusing two words—tuberculous and tubercular. Jacob Billikopf of Philadelphia is kind enough to send me a letter from Doctor Alexander Randall.

The mistake which you mention is a very frequent one, not only in lay writing, but likewise in medical literature. It is absolutely inaccurate. "Tubercular" is the adjective derived from the noun "tuberculum" (tubercle), and therefore means presenting the appearance of a tubercle, or provided with tubercles. "Tuberculous" is the adjective derived from the noun "tuberculosis," and therefore means affected with, or caused by tuberculosis.

This disease gets the name of tuberculosis because the microscopic lesion caused by the bacillus of tuberculosis forms a characteristic tubercle which to any one familiar with the microscope has characteristic and diagnostic features. But we use the word tubercle as a descriptive noun for other formations than those caused by the bacillus of tuberculosis. One can readily see from this that the child has out-grown the parent, and many have forgotten the word had other meanings before it was applied to a specific disease.

M. R. Jameson of New York makes a good distinction between strip'd and stripEd. The poets formerly indicated the monosyllable by the apostrophe.

Awhile ago I was corrected by an intimate for saying "stripEd" cat. He cautioned me that to accent the final syllable was a mark of provincialism, and told me a story of his meeting Mr. Erskine shortly after having entered Columbia University, when he had used a word with similar accentuation. Mr. Erskine inquired as to what country he was of, where the inhabitants still spoke in blank verse.

Since that reproof, I have been as scrupulous as habit would permit in eliminating the accent from such participles. Recently, however, in passing a person with noticeably warped legs, I instinctively made the mental comment of "How crookEd!" This recalled the tabu, so that I walked along for some blocks turning the whole subject over in mind. The result of this was the discovery of a clear distinction between crooked and crookEd. The latter connoting involuntary and permanent, the former transient or wilful.

These thoughts led me to review some other verbs, and I find that to me agEd means "very old," while aged is used as in the expressions "aged by fright" or "aged by his illness." Similarly, a cat or tiger is stripEd but a recently painted barber pole has been stript.

Now, perhaps, these connotations are pecu-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

liar to my own understanding, or they may be provincial (Southern, more particularly Texan). Is there any justification for these distinctions, or must I, to speak correctly, regardless of what they mean to me, recede to the flatness of a universally unstressed "ed"?

Joseph Conrad, both in conversation and in reading aloud, invariably made the final "ed" a separate syllable. I think we should always say, "You are bless'd with an excellent climate," and "May the blessEd angels protect you!"

The following letter from Thomas R. Gaines (Yale, 1904), of Pasadena, Calif., proves that early sound culture may provide salt in old age, that science, literature, and music may live in the same mind, and presents a portrait of a splendid American.

. . . Several years ago, while climbing in my favorite Sierra, I met a man of such distinguished appearance that I manœuvred to an acquaintance. It proved to be John E. Wolff, professor-emeritus of Geology, from Harvard, Harvard 1879 (mirabile dictu), student of and successor to Josiah D. Whitney.

Since then Professor Wolff and I have spent about one hundred nights in the open in our mountains. Out of his respect for J. D. Whitney, he and I climbed Mt. Whitney, and we have combed Death Valley and the surrounding mountains over an area of 4,000 square miles. . . .

Not long ago I called at his house for a few minutes to arrange some future trip we had in mind. It was not long before he had his stereopticon working to show colored microscopic pictures of crystal flakes enlarged 4,000 times—pictures of his own making, and from the rocks he and I had gathered. The wonder of it all was more than I can describe here.

All this, however, was no more than you would expect from a noted mineralogist. What followed was more, and the real point of my story. While putting his equipment away, he remarked that at times he tired of his profession and turned to music. He asked me if I knew that Beethoven had written some light music. Then turning to the piano he played the Sixth Symphony, there followed in contrast the light music of which he spoke, and then in further contrast, the Ninth Symphony. This from a man well up in his seventies.

The famous geologist, Josiah Whitney, was devoted to music all his life. When I was a graduate student at Harvard in the early nineties, I used to see him at the concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and as he invariably had with him the score, he must have owned a large music library.

My comment on subconscious poetry continues to draw instances. Mrs. Mildred Morrison, of Guthrie, Oklahoma, says that one Easter eve, while staying with friends, she found a bowl of lilacs in her room, which was flooded with moonlight. This brought memories of her youth and her family, and the final touch was added to the beauty and fragrance of the night by the singing of a mockingbird. In the morning she found that she had composed in her sleep the following:

April, humming a tune,
Swinging her bonnet,
Wearing a gown
With lilacs on it.

All aflame are the red bud bushes
Down on the creek where the water rushes
And dogwoods bloom.

April, singing a song,
Tossing her bonnet,
Flaunting a gown
With lilacs on it.

The famous Irishman, George W. Russell (A. E.) gave us a lecture this winter in New Haven on dreams, expressing his belief that they are evidence of another life—they contribute so much.

G. K. Chesterton, who happened to be in New Haven the same day that A. E. came thither, told me a good story of the great Catholic hymn-writer, Frederick W. Faber, author of "Hark, Hark, My Soul!" "Faith of Our Fathers!" etc.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In his last illness, after he had received extreme unction, and composed his mind for death, he asked the physician how long he had to live, and the answer was, "About an hour." Whereupon he said to a friend, "Then you can read me another chapter of Dickens," to which he listened with delight.

New books mentioned in this article are named below, with their publishers.

"Universities," by Abraham Flexner. Oxford. $3.50.
"Life in College," by Christian Gauss. Scribners. $2.50.
"These Russians," by Wm. C. White. Scribners. $2.
"The Entrancing Life," by Sir James Barrie. Scribners. $1.
"I'd Like to Do It Again," by Owen Davis. Farrar and Rinehart. $3.

Quaking Asp

By Badger Clark

Dainty in her white and green,
  Standing tall above the thicket,
With the manner of a queen
  And the gumption of a cricket,
Quaking Asp, the giddy miss,
  Gives her life for worse or better
  To the Breeze, that casual petter,
And forever courts his kiss.

She is first to wake and stir
  In the canyon at his coming,
And his least breath flutters her
  When the ridge pines hush their humming.
One touch from the roving swain
  Makes her happy altogether,
  Palpitant in sunny weather,
Sparkling even in the rain.

But she feels him growing cold.
  Then her folly runs to riot,
Decks her out in flaming gold,
  Shocks the ancient mountain quiet.
Lovely, love-mad Quaking Asp!
  Flaunting half a kingdom's plunder
  Till the deer and bobcat wonder
And the sober pine-trees gasp.

Last, her wild enticements fail,
  So she rips her gold to tatters,
Dons a gray and nunnish veil
  With an air that nothing matters.
Gale-whipped pines may roar and swing,
  But she stands there, numbly mooning,
  Till the warm chinook comes crooning
Through the hills ahead of Spring.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jacob's Ladder

(Continued from page 366)

consciously into rigidity. When one of Cap'n's family appeared on the distant side porch facing the tenant house, she darted inside.

The Yankee walked over one day and called them both out of the house.

"Wonder if your missus will take on our washing?" he asked Mart. "I'd expect to pay her extra, of course."

In his first week Mart had learned there were many things the Yankee did not know. He forgave him much for his ignorance. He stifled from expression the hot wave that swept over him.

He wanted to say, "No white woman don't ask another white woman to wash her dirty clothes fer her nor to carry her slops, neither. 'Course, fer a favor, like, a woman'll do most ary thing fer a woman in trouble, sick-a-bed. Or fer her own kin-folks."

He dared not. He shook his head. The Yankee shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

"Hit shore will be a pain, tryin' to work fer thet catbird," Mart said.

"I mean!" Florry agreed. "Hit'll be a pain right on."

Florry marvelled that Mart was able to go out among strangers and talk up to them. It distressed him, but he could force himself to it. He hated the grove work, not because it was hard, but because it was unfamiliar. He could not seem to learn fast enough to please the owner. When he was pruning, the Yankee constantly complained.

As a matter of course, Mart got out his traps, cleaned them up and set them at the far edge of the hammock grove near the lake edge. The Yankee's cow stepped in one and lamed herself a little. The Yankee recognized Mart. He raged just short of firing him. He would not have him trapping on his land and on his time. Mart pointed out that he was up at his traps before dawn. That made no difference.

But the fur money, sheer profit, was too tempting. Mart slipped closer to the lake and set his traps where the Yankee would not find them. Cap'n smelled the hides drying in the tenant house. He railed constantly. Mart's revolt was no more than held in leash.

"Florry, I swear me an' some Yankee's goin' to git mixed up some day," he confided to her. "I jest got no use fer one."

"I knows how you feels," she said. "I gits the same feelin', times."

"After the young un gits borned," he said hopefully, "mebbe we kin git out."

They decided against having a doctor. The last experience had been too financially disastrous. Nigger Will told them his old woman had helped birth many a child. She was better at bringing chillens than any white doctor. It seemed reasonable. It did not occur to them even to mention the matter to Cap'n or his wife. Old black Martha slipped in to stay with Florry when she began to have spells of faintness. She stayed in the house and no one knew she was there. Cap'n would perhaps not have permitted it. The old negress nursed Florry with a kindness that was like warm sun.

"You sho' is po'ly, chile," she said, disturbed, "po'ly as a snake. You wants to eat good and flesh up. You time 'bout come."

"Hit shore don't seem long enough," Florry puzzled.

"Mebbe you's to be took a little soon. Chile," she asked suspiciously, "you isn't done anything to git rid of it?"

Indeed she had not.

"Tha's right." The old woman sighed, relieved. "These days so many ladies don' want they chillen. I's raised all my gal chillens to live right and mind they manners wid de men. But I'se often tole 'em, 'Iffen one o' you does do wrong, now mind, iffen you does, and gits you'se'f in a way you hadn't oughta—why, you be lady enough to bring the chile into the worl'!' "

The child was born on a chill evening in January. The temperature had hung just above freezing all the dank and cloudy day. The Yankee kept Mart hauling wood, to fire the grove at night if necessary. At dusk a changing wind brought that rare phenomenon, a Florida snow. It hissed on the cypress shingles like a shower of pine needles. It blew in under the eaves of the flimsy tenant house and lay in scattered white flakes on the cold floor. Martha had a roaring fire on the hearth in the bedroom, but the other room was bleak and cold. Mart came in after dark. The temperature was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

still just thirty-two. They would not need to fire. He noticed the light fluff at his feet.

"What you spilt, Marthy," he asked wearily, "meal or salt?"

Weighted as she was with the announcing of his son's birth, she smiled at him.

"Snow new to you, son, ain't it? You don' know its ways. Dat snow on the flo'. Fust snow I'se seed in thutty year. Done come in thu the eaves. Snow's a searchin' thing. Searches in thu the eaves and thu the cracks. You got you a boy-chile, Mist' Mart, but he puny. Po' li'l Mis' Florry too scrambly-scrawny. The chile cain' live too long. You look at that snow good, boy. Snow be's like sorrow—hit searches people out."

The puny boy-child lived all spring and most of the summer. Florry could have been almost content if Mart were not like a wild-cat sullen in a cage. Mart hated the grove, but she loved it. Trees were gentle. The sounds they made were lovely sounds. The susurrus of the palms, the sibilance of the pines, the roar and rush of great winds through the oaks and magnolias, were the only music she had known. A holly tree, shining with glossy leaf-points, with green or red berries alive like eyes, was to her a bright friend. When a tree ripped and crashed in a storm, its death was pitiful, like that of an animal. Anywhere among trees she would be at home.

She had known wild oranges. The green richness of the cultivated grove was new to her. There was rhythm to the hexagonal planting, so that whichever way she looked, the trees made straight and marching rows. When the golden globes of fruit were picked, unharmed after the snow, it was as though bright lamps had been turned out around her.

The grove was in bloom when she was first able to sit out on the porch with the baby in her arms. The oranges and tangerines, the spicier grapefruit, the wild-rose-like bloom of the thorny trifoliata, drenched the world with their sweetness. The scent was more powerful at night. As soon as the sun withdrew its dryness, the bloom sent its odor into every nook and cranny of the air. It was inescapable. Still weak and dizzy, for weeks she dropped off to sleep at night, drowning in perfumed waters.

The jasmine was too far away in the hammock for more than a breath to reach her. It was tantalizing to get only a whiff of it. Compensation came in May. A magnolia sixty feet tall shaded the tenant house. It was covered from top to bottom with tall white candles that burst wide into dazzling glories, opening from the top down, like a Christmas tree being slowly lighted. The blossoming was leisurely. The great white blooms were above her head for weeks. Then the white petals began to drop down and turn russet on the ground. The yellow stamens fell. The huge green leaves, brown-faced, drifted down with a soft rattling on the roof. In summer, the white candles shone red. Tall red cones were thick with glistening seeds and the birds rustled in and out among the branches.

The Yankee complained about Mart's clothing. He wanted his hired man to look trim, like a servant. Mart had three sets of blue pin-check pants and blue denim shirts. He changed twice a week. There was no use, he said, in changing every day when he was wet with sweat an hour after he had begun to work. In his brown face and hands and arms, his bare golden chest, in his blue work-clothes, he was like a patch of good loamy soil covered with a mat of blue flowers. He had the smell of earth, with man-sweat and mule-sweat over it.

He handled the mules well. It was one thing Cap'n could not criticise. The negro ahead of him had almost ruined them. He had beaten them about the head, so that it took Mart weeks to make them stand for bridling. Slowly, easily, he gentled the team until they were as amenable as oxen. Cap'n was pleased. When Mart had such a way with the animals, when he was so handy at repairing tools and harness, the Yankee could not understand why he didn't get the hang of the grove work better. Why, when a task was done, he didn't come for further instructions, but went straying off with his wife in the nearby hammock or down to the lake. There was something about him the Yankee could not control, could not quite put his finger on, to make discipline take hold. He was like an old bird-dog, that, when you are not paying attention, goes pattering off, hunting for himself.

Mart had to wear boots at his work. He was in and out among brambles, over the evil cruelty of sand-spurs, in danger of stepping on rattlers and moccasins. He needed their protection, although they chafed his feet and heated his ankles. Cap'n had started him off with an old pair of his own. As Mart saw them wearing out, he tried to save a little each week to send off to the mail-order house for a new pair, but he could not get enough ahead. He had felt obliged to give old Martha five dollars, although she had professed herself willing to help out for nothing. A white man ought to pay a nigger. He had to buy un-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bleached muslin for sheets and towels and underclothing for Florry and the baby. The baby choked and gagged a great deal and he bought a bottle of colic medicine once a week.

His toes were out of the boots. Cap'n looked at them and laughed.

"Those look like nigger-shoes, Mart," he said. "Tell you what I'll do. I've decided to put in spring beans. If you'll stick by the crop and not go prowling off half the time, I'll stand treat for a new pair of boots."

They made good money on the beans. Mart forced himself to nurse the crop, doing long hours of working and hoeing he felt a nigger should be helping with. He felt some little interest in the rich, quick growth.

"I mean, we made beans," he said proudly to Florry.

Nothing more was said about the boots. The soles were loose. He tied them to the uppers with binder twine, but they continued to flap under him. He decided to speak.

"How abouten them bootses, Cap'n?"

"Oh, yes." The man frowned impatiently.

Matt saw him glancing over the mail-order catalogue. When the boots came, Mart could see they were so flimsy they would not last the summer.

"Them soles is paper," Florry said. "One good wettin', like, 'll jest turn 'em to mush."

Mart drew them on and laced them slowly.

Florry went bare-footed always. When she kept out of the sand-spurs, the light sand was soft under her feet. Her toes were spread wide. Her thin muscular legs were strong and straight. Even when she carried the baby lightly on one shoulder, she walked erect and firm. Her gait had the quality of a trot, so that she seemed to be walking with determination to some certain place.

One afternoon nigger Will stopped by with a post-card addressed to Mart that had been left in his box. It had a picture of a red house and some printing on it. Mart had gone to town with the mules to get feed. He would not be back before dark. It might be something very important. She lipped a little of Mart's snuff and pondered. Better find out. She tucked the baby over one hip, his little wizened head hanging down, and walked over to the side porch of the Yankee house. The Yankee woman saw her coming on her first call. There was something a little alarming in the fixed swing forward, the steady Indian-like tread of the lean body.

Florry said "Evenin'," and thrust out the card.

The woman turned it over, uncomprehending.

"Will you please to read hit?" Florry explained.

The card was an advertisement from a raw fur house. It quoted probable prices for the coming year. Florry listened gravely as the woman read aloud the list of wanted skins.

"Be thet all?"

"The name of the firm and their address."

"Read hit."

Then, "I thanks you." The girl reached out to take the card again and turned to go.

The Yankee woman had a strange feeling of bafflement.

"How are you getting along?" she called to the straight thin back.

Florry half turned.

"Purty good." Then, truthfully, "Nothin' extry."

"Is your house comfortable?"

"Hit'll do, now I got it cleant." She paused. "The antses is bad. I cain't keep the antses out o' Mart's breakfast."

She paced back to the tenant house.

The Yankee's family went north early and in late May he followed. The mosquitoes in the grove were very bad. The tall grass, which Cap'n did not want cut until August, bred them. They came up from the marsh in high-singing droves. All night they sounded like a high-pitched machine. The few old screens in the tenant house were gaping with rusty holes. Florry stuffed the door-cracks with paper and tried to block the paneless windows. But the old house itself was settling, wall from wall, beam from beam, timber from timber. They could see sunlight through the gaps by day and stars by night. They kept smudges going in the yard, but there was no keeping out the mosquitoes.

Mart bought enough mosquito netting to make a little canopy for the baby's pallet on the floor. It would cost more than he could get together to buy enough for their own bed. Cap'n sent him his wages each week by mail, and by the time he bought rations and colic medicine and snuff and tobacco, there was nothing left. He got young Boyter to write him a letter to the Yankee asking for money for a mosquito bar. The Yankee did not answer for a long time. At last he wrote, reminding Mart that he'd never had a mosquito bar in his life and if he indulged him now Mart would expect too much of him.

"First thing you know, Mart," the Cap'n wrote, "your wife'll be wanting running water in the tenant house."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That day Florry saw Mart walking around and around the Yankee house.

"What you lookin' fer?" she asked.

"To see kin I git in. Iffen I kin git in, us'll shore sleep on the floor in there. Us'd jest go in and out to sleep, like, and not do no harm."

But he could not make an entrance without ripping off a door or a barred shutter. Florry was not willing to have him do that.

The mosquitoes were of a feverless variety, but sleeping under covers on the hottest nights to keep away from them, weakened her. She had only begun to be strong again. She had recurrent fever attacks. Her milk grew scant and poor. The under-sized baby had grown very little. It was blue-white in color. The unhappy small face scarcely seemed to recognize the mother. Even its cry was not a lusty one. It whimpered and fretted. In mid-August, Florry was feverish for a week. One morning the baby turned blue, then black, and merely failed to draw again the thread-like breath that all along had been its dubious hold on life.

They had half-expected it to go, but there seemed nothing to do about it. Old Martha had seen it once or twice, had exclaimed "Do, Jesus!" and made it some herb tea. She had assured them there would be no raising it. But when it was actually gone, a dull knife turned over in Florry's vitals and for long months would not give her rest. She stroked the small cold body over and over while Mart sat in a corner, whittling a stick unhappily.

"Well," he said at last, "mought as well go make it a grave."

They had never given it a name. It seemed always too indefinite to need one.

"Dig it where the varmints and the hogs won't git to root it," Florry called.

They decided that back of the house, in the grove itself, would be safest. Mart knocked together a small pine box—it was astonishing how little room the body took—and lined a hole in the sand with bricks from the chimney of an old smoke-house. Florry washed the baby and dressed it in clean clothes. She trembled a little as Mart piled bricks on top of the box and threw in three safe feet of sand. He stood back and looked at her questioningly.

"No need fer to mark it," she said faintly from pale lips. "Cap'n mought not like it and then we'd have fer to dig it up agin."

She dug up some petunias from the Yankee garden and planted them above the pine box.

"They'll seed theirselves, even after the land be ploughed," she explained.

With the rainy season, the vegetation swelled overnight. The red-top was man-high. Dog-fennel lined the roadway like a green wall. The coffee-weed was thick in the pasture lot. Mart mowed hay and stored it in the barn. The citrus sized up rapidly. By late August the grapefruit boughs were bending to the ground. The slim branches of the orange trees were freighted with more than they could bear.

Cap'n came down early in September, just after the high winds had come and gone. Whole sections of trees lay cracked to the ground, a quarter of the crop flat and ruined. Growth conditions had made the limbs too brittle for the immense crop of fruit. He called down frenzied imprecations on Mart's head.

"You Cracker fool," he finished, "when you saw what was happening, why didn't you prop the limbs?"

"I allus reckoned trees could take care of theirselves," Mart said quietly. "I allus thought trees jest takened what comed."

He went to Florry gravely.

"Florry, I got a bait of it. I got eight dollars. Le's us go down to the Gulf and see kin us make us a livin' salt-water fishin'."

She hesitated, her thought on the petunias growing purple and white.

"Hit suits me," she said at last.

They packed their few belongings in cardboard cartons and set off on foot before dawn. The sunrise came on them as they crossed the prairie west of the lake. The waters were rosy and the white egrets circling up from the reeds were tinged with pink. The man and woman cut a little north through a stretch of flat-woods.

"Hit's done been a sorree-full yare," Florry said. "I shore be proud to git shet of it."

V

The wharves of the last westerly town dropped slowly behind Mart and Florry in the rowboat. They set out down-stream at the full of the tide. Mart had bought a sunken boat for fifty cents, raised it and repaired it. It was too make-shift for fishing, but it would take them down the tidal river to the Gulf.

Mart rowed with jerking, powerful strokes. The current was with him, yet it was hard going until the tide should turn. Florry sat in the bow, the high afternoon sun in her face, the river dazzling, flipping its spray over her now and then. The oppression of the town, of the ever-alarming contact with folk, lifted from her. She felt light-headed. She hummed a little, "Jacob's Ladder."

A rush of vital force surged through the man. The escape from the town, the push of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the river-current toward new ground, the sound of Florry's small, sweet voice, stirred him. He picked up the song from her.

"Jacob's ladder's steep an' ta-all—
When I lay my burden down!
If you try to climb, you boun' to fa-all—
When I lay my burden down!"

There was no burden. The sorrowful year was over and forgotten. The tide was turning. Tide and wind and current were taking them down the river to a deep sea thick with fish. Florry dipped her fingers in the river water and tasted it. It was brackish. They were coming closer to the Gulf.

The river lost its identity reluctantly. Its banks followed it far into deep water. Toward the mouth, the banks broke up into a succession of shell and limestone islands, where Spanish bayonets fought with palmettos for a footing. Cactus showed among the undercover. Cedars twisted and writhed and grew sturdy on bare rock. Florry studied them, like new strange faces.

They reached Alligator Joe's island at sunset. Alligator Joe's name was now only legend, but the high ground of his island home was fine camping. Some other fisherman had been ahead of them, for a camp was built. It was a good sign, warming, like a welcome.

Pine saplings had been nailed together to make the bare framework of a shack. The peaked ridge poles were thatched with palmetto fans. The walls were of palmetto fans, closely overlapping, nailed by the stems upside down, so that no amount of wind or rain could beat through them. Square openings were left for doors and windows. The builder had not camped there long and he was not long gone. The palm fronds had scarcely finished drying. Their gold was still streaked with sage-green. They rustled constantly, for there was a breeze as steady as the Trades. Day and night, the whole shelter murmured as though it were alive. Small gray lizards were already at home in the thatched rustling roof. The rustling of the palmetto fans seemed the voice of the river—the current, the marsh grass and the tides made audible.

Mart made sure his patched boat was safely moored. Florry cooked bacon and grits with a Gulf sunset riotous beyond her. It was fine to see the sun go down again. She waved a thin arm about her.

"Be this Mexico, Mart?"

"Not yit. This be Floridy right on." He pointed. "Yonder, jest out o' sight, down to the end o' the river, be the Mexico Gulf. But Mexico's a furrin country. It be way yonder, acrost them miles o' waters."

She stared, trying to make out the Gulf, and maybe Mexico.

Sleep was sweeter here than she had ever known it. The cool salt air cradled her. The dried palm leaves' whispering overlaid the suck of the tidal water on the shingle. She roused up once at night, only to breathe deeply of the sibilant peace, to touch Mart gently, to make sure he too was there.

He intended to start off the next morning alone. Florry begged to go.

"They'll be a bait o' times when I won't git to go, when you gits to fishin'," she pleaded. "Hit'll make me feel acquainted-like to go when I kin."

It was not the folk she longed to know, but the river. The small islands were entities with whom she would become familiar. The river seemed uninhabited as they rowed to the mouth. After the wild-life of the piney-woods and the populous hammock, it was strange to see no live things moving, no birds, no small furry faces turned to her for a brief moment. After she had lived on these back-waters of the Gulf for a few weeks, she would know where to look for the few shy birds and animals. She began to distinguish a human habitation here and one there. There was only a handful of families on the lower river. Houses on islands were often sunk out of sight among palms and cedars. Others lay up the winding salt creeks and were not visible from the river.

The chief of the small fishing clan lived up Channel Creek. The creek was no more than a canal connecting two of the tidal rivers. It wound interminably, like a tangled thread. The reeds and grasses were so high, the route so tortuous, that the boat seemed to be making no headway, land-bound and forgotten between flexible green walls.

Cap'n Harper's house sat back in the marsh, reared high on stilts. A swaying plank walk sagged for two hundred yards from wharf to house. The wharf was over an old oyster bed. It was low tide and the shells showed thick in gray muck. A sizable fishing dory with a sturdy in-board motor rocked at the wharf.

Mart was not gone long. He came back to report that Harper had just come in from a night's fishing, sleepy and a little ugly.

"He didn't shore enough promise I could fish fer him," Mart said. "He done tole me to come along an' fish with 'em a whiles, thouten no shares nor wages, to see could I git the hang of it."

"You kin git the hang of it all right," Florry

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

said confidently. "You done good on the lake. You belong to do good at it."

"Hit's all right," Mart said. "He's got to see does my ways suit his ways. He'll likely give me fish and us is got rations fer a while and a leetle more cash money. They ain't no hurry."

"No, they ain't no hurry," Florry agreed comfortably. "No use a-hurryin' no ways, no time."

When Cap'n Harper told them they might stay, Mart rowed Florry in and out among the islands at the mouth of the river, house-hunting. They had their choice of several deserted houses. The island they chose was on the incurve of a cove. High, it still was not visible either from Gulf or river. Florry liked the feeling that no one could look in. No human life came within her vision, but there would be enough to see. Far out she could glimpse the fishing boats. There was never anything else. The steamship lanes were further west.

Her house had once been very fine. It was two tall stories of weathered gray cypress, with gables and chimneys. A broad-columned porch spread across the front, sagging at the corners. There were endless gaunt rooms. The house was sunk almost out of sight in oleanders, shell-pink and fragrant. The gray-limbed bushes grew taller than the roof. The flowers dropped their soft pink petals all over the gray shingles.

Straggling in exotic borders on either side of the path leading to the water, were venerable fig trees. Fat yellow figs hung dripping, like great beads of amber. Some had dried on the trees without falling and these were withered and honey-sweet. Mart and Florry stuffed greedily, hungry for fruit and for sweets.

Florry found a sunken pot of geraniums alive by the back steps. Some one had lived here recently. After they had been in the house a few days, the aromatic smoke of cedar logs curling up from the chimneys, an immense black and brown house-cat emerged from the woods. It skirmished about, watching for hours from the thicket. It had been deserted by the planter of geraniums three years before. It was sleek and fat. Small game was plentiful on the island. When Florry called, it yowled distressingly, as though it would have her understand that it longed, but feared, to come. At last it came to her. It kneaded its paws and beat its head against her.

Harper told them they had chosen a good place. It was even possible, he said, to grow a little garden in the few inches of top-soil above the shell and limestone. The droppings of the live oaks, the cedars, the bay, the palms, and the myrtle, had finally created a layer of humus.

"And they ain't nothin' there to watch out fer," he encouraged them, "exscusin' rattlesnakes. Tell ye what I'll do fer ye. Give ye a leetle shoat fum my new litter. Too many fer the ole sow to nuss. When it grows up it'll clare the place of ary snakeses."

Florry made a pet of the small runty black porker. Wherever she went, the pig trotted behind her, and the immense cat with its tail high in the air.

"I's got me enough comp'ny now to suit anybody," she said.

She raised the pig on cornmeal and water. For lack of milk it did not grow. The blue cedar berries had fallen to the ground, and the live oak acorns. It soon found these and made a living for itself. It slept with the cat under the house. Florry felt as though she had lived here a long time. Now and then she saw a familiar bird, a red-bird in a cedar, a gray or white crane in the marsh. Marsh chickens, smaller than quail, walked daintily on the shore of the island, picking up food in the mucky sand. Mart made spring traps and they caught all they wanted to eat. On the uninhabited islands lived water-turkeys and pelicans and black nigger-geese. The gulls came and went.

Florry thought the army of fiddler crabs at the edge of the water came to know her. When she walked among them they no more than moved out of her way. When Mart came, they rushed to the grasses or into the water. Their movement made a hissing sound, like the rustle of a stiff silk. Sometimes units of them paused, and lifted their single large claws up and down in rhythm. They became an orchestra, sawing without sound on invisible fiddles.

Mart felt a free man again. Taking the fisherman's orders was quite different from laboring under the alien cloud of the Yankee's displeasure. Harper turned over to him a flat-bottomed skiff and a gill net black with age. Mart would have to fish on shares. He had no money for equipment. Even the old rotten net was worth twenty dollars. Mart was assigned Cully Johnson for partner. Cully was a tall youngster of fourteen. The Johnsons were kin to the Harpers. As on the inland lake, Mart was being utilized to help a younger member of the tribe add to the family profits. He was an outsider and he was willing to take what was left. If fishing was good over any considerable length of time, even on third shares he could save up for a net and boat of his own.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He found Cully a good partner. His slim brown body was almost as strong as a man's. He could pull in his share of the great net, loaded with fish, as competently as Mart. There was a trick to paying out the net over the stern of the dory, a trick to handling it in again. On land, it must be spread just so on parallel poles to dry. There was a trick to fanning it—gathering it in folds so that it would dry evenly. It was a matter of rhythm. One man alone could handle the net when he knew his business. Often, when the fish were running, Mart took the boat out alone by night and Cully took it out by day.

After Mart came to feel sure of himself, he took Florry with him when he fished alone. It frightened her a little to pass from the river into the open Gulf. The mouth of the river was an end and a beginning. At a certain point it could be said, "Here, now, the river is alive." A few yards more, past the last wind-beaten cedar, there was no longer any river. There was only the blue horizon. As it is told of a departing life, the river was not ended, but was become part of the sea's infinity.

More than ever at night, the boat was precipitated into a dark eternity of waters. The last receding islands loomed immense. The black heads of the palms towered above the earth. The water was black as Death itself. On moonlit nights the world was silver. Flecks of silver dotted the Gulf as far as Florry could see, so thick, so glittering, it seemed she could gather them by handfuls. The islands behind were silver, and the palm trees. The fish in the net flashed silver.

It was slow work finding the net on dark nights, finding the way in and out of the river. All the work seemed slowed up by a great dark hand. Fishing, day or night, was on the low tide. The boats went from one to four miles out in the Gulf, fishing the flats. Sinkers along the bottom edge, corks along the top, made the long straight nets stand like wavy fences down in the water. In calm weather they stood as erect as though posts held them. The fish swam into them and were hooked by the gills in the small meshes.

The usual catch was an assortment of sheepshead, drum, mullet, butter-fish, needle-fish, sea-trout and mackerel in season. Stingarees were a nuisance in the nets. Mart's only complaint was over the painful necessity of removing them. The fat blue crabs were a pest. They tore the nets as if they were feasting on a choice bait. Mart and Florry could not believe it when Harper told them there were people who ate the meat.

"Them spidery things! They cain't be fitten!"

When she was alone, Florry sometimes took the old patched boat and rowed in and out among the winding cross channels. On each inhabited island nets were hung in the sun to dry, cream-colored, tan, gray or black, according to their time of service. Once a porpoise leaped and blew in the river near her. Cully told her a porpoise often came in and fished out the river.

"Reckon this un was jest traipsin' around, a-visitin'," she decided.

She and Cully were good friends. He was solemn and mature. She saved him pieces of corn pone and let him talk to her of what he thought the world was like. The world to him, as to her, was the rest of Florida. He took her one day to visit his family. Florry sat painfully on the steps of their shack and answered questions. The place was dirtier than hers and the family seemed poorer. So many children ate up a heap of rations.

Cully took her around the Johnson island to show her the sights. He led her with pride to a small rectangle planted with vines, with a rickety cross at one end.

"This be Bob's grave," he said. "He got kilt daid by the pneumony."

Florry found herself suddenly weak.

"I got me a grave," she told the boy. "Back yonder to the east I burrit me a young un, a leetle ole baby no bigger'n a cat."

No bigger than a cat, but the old pain was on her.

In the late winter Mart fell into a great piece of luck. Harper's son Eph was away, 'shining, and Mart was given a place in the motor dory for a week, on fourth shares. They ran unexpectedly into huge schools of pompano. The pompano ran for two days and two nights. The slim silvery fish announced their coming half a mile away, raising the surface of the water visibly. The boat was ready for them. The motor was fast enough to throw out one end of the net and circle around the fish, ahead of them. They must be taken quickly, or they were gone forever.

The dory took in hundreds of pounds in the forty-eight hours of the aristocrats' passing. Pompano had been scarce for two years. They brought twenty-five cents a pound at the wholesale market. The whole town came to the dock to see the dory unloaded. Boats put out feverishly from all the tidal rivers, but the pompano had passed.

Mart's share of the big catch was enough to buy the net and rowboat he was using. He

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was now the capitalist. When Cully fished alone, Mart had half of the catch coming to him. His own catches need no longer be shared. Until early summer he prospered.

Then the fish, of a sudden, simply were not there any more. It was astonishing. Mart and the Johnsons and the Harpers lamented together.

"There ain't ary fish by day nor there ain't ary fish by night."

"Hit's them pound-net fishermen north up the Gulf," Harper decided. "Them big ole pound-nets, with traps in the bottoms, they jest scoops in everything. 'Course, them fellers has the right to make a livin', but it shore makes fishin' sorry down here."

Two or three days often passed without a catch. Times were lean. The fish house paid three cents a pound. When twenty pounds of fish at this price had to be divided two or three ways, there was not enough to buy grits and meal. Mart and Florry were better off than the rest. Johnson said that if fishing did not soon improve, he would have to give away his two younger boys. He could not feed them.

The Johnsons and the Harpers had no gardens on their bare soil. They could no longer buy greens. They grew sallow from the steady diet of fish and corn pone. Mart had planted a garden back of the old house, where the soil was thickest on the shell. Florry tended it. They had collards and cow-peas and pole beans. They shared as far as they could.

Harper fought the fish house to get four cents a pound.

"This is Saturday," the dealer answered. "If I have to pay you men four cents to-day, the fish house won't open Monday morning."

Fishing would pick up. They knew that. The fish would run again. It was a question of how long they could all hold out.

Perhaps despair made them careless. Harper must have known the signs. He had seen too many September gales drive in across the wide sweep of the Gulf not to know a fuzzykin. In the daytime that mass of black cloud, low-slung in the south, full of wind and thunder, was ominous but not alarming. Time could be gauged, and distance. At night, seeing that certain sign of high winds, Harper should have had the small fleet put in at once.

Wind in the south—and thunder. Especially at night. This time of year. They should have scurried in ahead of it, hell-bent. The first squall caught them from the south-west with the saved-up force of hundreds of miles. The black rain came in sheets. The gale seemed to pile half the Gulf into the two shore-miles. Harper in the motor dory set out for the mouth of the river, calling to the slow boats to follow. Cully wanted to pull an oar but Mart took both.

"This be work fer a man, son."

Mart had not known such effort was in him. He was fighting the Gulf of Mexico, with all the winds of the Caribbean behind it. The wind seemed to move him at a terrific speed, but the waves caught up with him and spat venomously into the flat boat. Cully bailed fiercely. His young wet face, white in the night, showed the sternness of an old man.

Harper looked back. A long flash of lightning showed the small boats foundering. Ten men bailing could not have kept them from swamping. One by one they filled to the gunwales. Harper put back and took the men on board the dory. The dory put into Channel Creek and the men slept that night on the floor of Harper's house. The next morning, although the gale still raged, he took them to their own islands, working through the maze of cross channels.

Florry had not slept. She had been afraid for Mart for the first time. On the north point of the island she had tried to build a signal fire as a guide for him. It was useless in the roaring downpour. The west end of the porch roof had blown in. She could not have slept long in the din, at best, but whenever she lay down and dozed a moment, she was awakened sharply by a black vision of Mart swimming in the Gulf—then going under. When he landed at the foot of the path below the fig trees, like a phantom in the rain, it was as though he had come back to her from the bottom of the Gulf. She stirred up the fire on the hearth and moved the coffee pot closer to the coals.

"Leetle boats done gone," he said after he had eaten.

"Nets, too?"

"I mean. They was in the boats."

"Won't they float, with all them big corks?"

"Mought. But they'll likely git all tangled up with the boats. Iffen they does float, they'll dreeft on beyant where we could ketch 'em at."

They sat silently by the window with rags stuffed in the broken panes and watched the palm trees bend and the cedars flatten. The Gulf seas thrust long gray claws up the river. The wind roared steadily. Florry shook the sound of it off impatiently. Wind had once been only wind, a good sound in the trees. Now it was something else. A brief moment of resentment against it came over her, like the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rare flickers of hate she had once felt for old Jo. Her thoughts came and went uncertainly in her mind, like fish far down in a dark pool.

The high tide was due in mid-afternoon. As the time approached, the Gulf seas swelled to appalling size. The gale was at its height. At three o'clock, with a great heaving and rolling, there came in what is still known on the river as the high salt tide. It writhed up the river like a sea-serpent, in and out among the islands, and flooded land that had never been submerged before.

"Mart," Florry asked, "us kin stay here right on? You kin fish with Harper's? Or the fish-house mebbe credit you on a boat and net?"

Yet she knew the answer. He shook his head.

"Reckon not. Harper cain't no more'n use his own kin-folks in the dory. He's studyin' on movin' down to Cedar Key. Fishin's some better there. The fish-house feller was down to Harper's this mornin'. He's closin' up."

"Us could ketch enough fish fer our own rations," she persisted, "and us got a fine garden comin' on. I seed yestiddy the beans was up, and the cabbage jest comin' thu."

They walked back to the kitchen window to look out at the garden on the low slope back of the house. The high salt tide was on it. The new green sprouts just had their heads above the sucking water. To-morrow the brine would have made black wisps of them. Florry's lips twitched.

"Hit'll be plumb destroyed," she whispered.

Mart looked at her curiously.

"Ain't you gittin' to be a froggy leetle ole thing?" he said. "I got me good plans. Eph Harper ain't been gittin' but seventy-five cents a gallon fer his 'shine. He sa-ays there be good money in 'shine in the right place. He's fixin' to clare out fer Putnam County and start him a still in the scrub. He sa-ays Putnam County likker do bring a fine price, two, three dollars a gallon, if you takes time to run it thu twicet, so it ain't raw. He sa-ays he'd as leave carry me with him as not. I ain't never been in the scrub, but I allus hankered to see it. You'd like it fine."

She pondered.

"Would I jest leave the ole cat here, like I found it?"

"Shore. You cain't tote cats fum one county to another. They allus runs away."

"Kin I carry the pig?"

"Eph wouldn't want no pig messin' up his flivver. Tell you, Florry, we kin barbecue the pig jest afore we starts and carry it fer rations."

"Mart, dogged iffen I could eat ary mouthful o' thet leetle ole critter. The longer I chawed it, the bigger it'd git."

He frowned.

"Hit's take it thet-a-way or leave it, one. Pigs was meant fer eatin'. Hit'll git et some 'eres else iffen we don't eat it. Hit'll jest be pork when it's daid. Now don't you take on, Florry," he soothed her. "Hit don't make no special difference where we goes nor what we does. Rations be rations, right on. Hit don't make no difference where we squats to eat 'em."

"No," she agreed, reassured. "Hit don't make a mite o' difference, do it?"

VI

The river folk who knew Eph Harper could have warned Mart, if they would, that a year with Eph would be a year of treachery. In the vast silence of the scrub country, with cabins in clearings sometimes twenty miles apart, it would seem that there would be no evil for Eph to do; that two men would cleave together, in any case, for safety. But it was in the man to betray.

Florry was in no danger from him, although at first the three shared a shack in the high region above the Ocklawaha. When Mart's back was turned and Eph made tentative overtures, she did not even understand. He watched her afterward with wonder in his square yellow face, squatting on his haunches, his long arms dangling from his bunchy body, like a frustrated ape. Besides, a different kind of treachery was to his taste. He was a born informer.

Their location was good for liquor making. Eph set up his still on the bank of the river, so deep in saw palmettos that the approach of federal invaders would be announced far off by the loud rattling of the sharp fronds. They were equally safe from the river side. The clear cold river water ran swift under overhanging buttonwoods and cypresses and swamp laurel. It eddied against banks riotous with wild scarlet hibiscus and white spider lilies.

The shack they lived in was high above, up a steep bank where cooters came to lay their eggs, and skunks and 'coons to dig them out and eat them. The variegated growth along the river gave way, back of the shack, to dense virgin scrub. Scrub oaks and pines stood as close as matches in a box, match-lean, with myrtle and rosemary at their feet. The scrub was always shadowy, except where

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the deep sand roads cut through in blazing sunlight. Areas that had been burned over by forest fires were shadeless; the scrub naked and exposed, marked only by the tracks of deer and wild-cat.

Mart had not begun to understand that Eph was using him for the mean work necessary; for the carrying of water; for the setting of the mash; for the long watches when the mash was slow to heat, slow to cook, and the drops of water-clear liquor at the end of the copper coil dripped as slowly as turpentine sap.

Eph found him a red-lipped girl in the scrub, a half-wild thing who would always mate here and there like any rabbit. He moved with her into another shack, five miles down the river, and left Mart with most of the labor of the still. Florry began to help in Eph's place. The arrangement seemed logical enough. Eph owned the still. He had to take what shelter he could find for his girl, and five miles was quite a distance to come to light a fire under the boiler. Eph took the finished liquor to a house some miles east of Palatka, where it was picked up for further relay.

Until uneasiness at being dependent on Eph came over them, Mart and Florry were contented here. No human voices came to startle them. Eph brought their rations with him on his return trips. The shack was on higher ground than they had ever known and it was a treat to look across the river valley to blue and purple distant ridges. The scrub was soft underfoot as a carpet. Pine needles and oak leaves, undisturbed on white sand, gave beneath their bare feet with a delicious yielding. There was game again to eat; wild turkeys, rabbits and 'possums, and young squirrels fat on hickory nuts and pine mast.

Mart shot a 'coon in the early spring. There came snuffling up to the dead body a young one, no more than a few days old. It let Mart pick it up as if it were a baby. When he took it home to Florry it nestled in her lap snugly, then cried to be fed. The creature seemed half-human. The palms of the fore-paws were marked like a child's. When it tussled with Florry a little roughly, and she slapped it in punishment, it ran off whimpering with an un-animal distress. She added canned milk to her list of rations for Eph to bring. It ate the things they ate, more daintily than they.

It washed its face and hands in the wash basin, like a well-trained child. It snuggled as soft in Florry's arms as the baby she had lost. Its pointed face with the black mask peered into hers with a recognizable affection. It liked to sit on her shoulder and rub its soft nose and long pointed hands across her neck. They kept it in the house at night, for fear of wild-cats. It fought persistently to sleep next to Florry in the bed, but Mart found this distasteful.

"Hit's a cute leetle feller," he admitted, "but hit's a varmint right on."

Florry fixed a padded box for it on the floor beside the bed. When Mart was asleep it slipped stealthily under the cover on the edge and lay mouse-still all night, its enigmatic face close to hers on the moss pillow. At daybreak Florry put it in the box again, before Mart wakened. It looked up at him smugly when he arose.

When Mart and Florry went off into the scrub together, they taught it to stay at the house, driving it back with switches. It ran around and around the shack in protest, its longer hind legs giving it an awkward gallop. Then it reared up, its fore-paws in the air, and craned its neck after them. Occasionally it disappeared in the scrub for a few hours. They found they could not eat 'coon meat at all any more. There was enough of other meat, in any case, through the winter season. Twice they had the small black bear of the Florida scrub. The deer seemed scarce and wild.

Old-timers in the scrub said to Mart, "You cain't git no deer in the open season. Them hunters fum all over is a-stirrin' up the woods with their dogs an' their fuss an' their shootin'. They thinks it's a big thing, does a whole camp git 'em a deer. You jest wait 'til the law closes down. Closed season be open season fer us what lives here. The deer gits to be a plumb nuisance in the spring and summer. You cain't make cow-peas, nary a crop, the deer be so crazy fer 'em. They'll lepp ary fence to git to 'em. You kin git all the deer you wants. You jest wait."

It was the venison that gave Eph away. He was ready to get rid of Mart. He had his market for his liquor, his price established. He was ready to move the still close to his own cabin, let his girl do some of the work, and collect the profits instead of sharing them.

Mart had been timorous about shooting deer out of season. The meat was more than they could use before it spoiled. Tales had reached him of the high fines imposed for out-of-season shooting. But in the first heat of May, Florry had not been well. She was languid, without appetite. They had had no fresh meat for some weeks. A young buck paused within range of Mart one afternoon. Before it could show its white scut and flash away, Mart had

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brought it down. He broiled the choice steaks over live-oak coals. Florry enjoyed it and ate plentifully. She thought it made her feel a little livelier.

The next morning, on his way down the river to help old man Bradson round up hogs, he carried a hindquarter of venison to Eph. He was pleased to bring such a fine gift to his friend. Eph took it with thanks. As later testimony brought out, he and the girl gorged on it that day and the next. Then Eph drove to Waleka, looked up the game warden and turned Mart up. Eph swore to an affidavit that to his personal knowledge one Martin had shot a buck deer on May the eighteenth.

The trial is still talked of. All over the scrub, through Marion and Putnam counties, one man says of another, "He's as good a neighbor as Eph Harper," and it is known at once what depths of treachery are implied.

The lawyer who had volunteered to defend Mart, questioned Eph's girl.

"How can you swear the meat was deer-meat? Venison is very similar to beef."

"Well," she hesitated, "I seed a deer-hair on hit."

The crowded court-room stirred.

A venerable Cracker announced audibly, "Dogged iffen thet ain't purty fine swearin'."

Before Mart was put on the stand, old man Bradson rose majestically in court.

"Somepun's jest come to me," he announced.

The judge rapped for silence.

"Thet affeedavit this yere Harper has sweared to, do I understand the date be May eighteenth of this yare?"

A hunter himself, the judge recognized the river patriarch. He looked at the document before him.

"Yes, Mr. Bradson. Do you wish to testify?"

"I shore do."

"Swear him—. Now then, Mr. Bradson?"

"I got me a Coca-Cola calendar in the kitchen an' I jest happened to be studyin' it this mornin'. Wa'n't the eighteenth a Sat-day?"

"It was."

"Well then, Jedge, I cain't swear I'd know deer-meat by a hair on hit, but I shore kin swear by God A'mighty thet on Sat'day, May the eighteenth, this man Martin was to my house the hull day. He come soon in the mornin' to he'p me round up some hogs an' he worked with me to good-dark. My wife done give him a bite o' supper, seein' as it were so late. He didn't have no gun nor no deer-meat, nor I didn't see no deer-hairs on him. He didn't shoot no gun on the way home, nor pick up no deer, fer I went home with him 'count o' bein' on my way to my son's house fer Sunday."

The record shows that the judge had to silence the roar of delight that shook the court-room. Eph's yellow face was white. Old Bradson's word was unimpeachable. Mart had indeed worked for him on that day. It was only a perfunctory matter for him to testify that he had no means of telling one date from another, but that if the date named on the papers was the date he had worked for Bradson, the papers lied. Eph had made the mistake of assuming that Mart had shot the deer the same morning that he brought him the meat. The case was dismissed.

It was known generally that Mart had shot a deer out of season. Eph's crime was greater. He had broken a frontier law more fundamental than the game rules. Yet Mart's safe return from the hands of the law was to Florry miraculous.

Because neither knew how to change the arrangement, the two men continued to 'shine together. It was their joint livelihood. Mart worked silently, watching Eph constantly for fear of attack. Eph was surly.

"He'd shore be proud to shoot me in the back, behint a clump o' palmeeters," Mart told Florry, "but he ain't got the chidlin's."

Chance probably played into Eph's hands, for he would not have planned to betray Mart at the expense of losing his still. It is certain that the federal men merely nosed out the still. Eph was heading for it when he saw the agents creeping toward the bank where the odor of the sour mash rose strong. Florry caught a glimpse of him running toward home. He did not warn Mart, as he might easily have done. Mart's only escape would have been the river. The agents hand-cuffed him and smashed the still. They allowed him to speak with Florry before they took him away.

"Git on outen here afore Eph gits to harm you," he told her. "Go work fer ole man Bradson whilst I be shut up. I'll come there fer you. Git Bradson to find out how long they puts me in fer. When the time's up, you be ready and us'll git back to the hammock where us fust come, when us went off together. I been studyin' on the way up the hill. Us'll go back to the hammock and go to trappin' agin, come winter."

He was gone.

When he came back on foot a month later, Florry was not at Bradson's. He found her still

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the shack above the river, with the 'coon. She was gaunter than he had ever known her.

"I didn't aim to be with folks," she excused herself. "I had me yore gun and I felt safer-like here. I made me some box-traps and caught me rabbits, and I fished some. Eph ain't bothered me."

"Hit wa'n't right," he said slowly, "but it cain't be he'ped now. You ready? Le's go."

"Mart," she pleaded, "I don't aim to worry you none, but I shore would be proud to carry the 'coon with us."

The 'coon was half-grown and fat and heavy. Mart looked at it wearily. He was already tired.

"You be quare, Florry," he said. "I hates to refuse you, but dogged iffen I kin see ary sense to totin' a half-growed varmint."

"Hit's hard to leave so'thin' behint, ever'-time we goes," she said patiently.

As they walked off, she looked back at the 'coon, sitting reared up on the cabin door-sill. As far as she could see behind her, its quizzical masked face was visible.

VII

Dust lay yellow on the palmetto scrub. The rattler coiled in its uncooling shade was almost invisible. Florry's bare feet padded close to him. He lifted his head, weaving it somnolently. The whirr of his rattle was faint, like a far-off cacophony of dry castor-beans. He was indifferent to her passing, sluggish, an old snake weary in the September heat.

Her lean body was sweaty with carrying a bucket of drinking water from the spring-fed branch two miles away; two miles of hammock, whose undergrowth whipped her face and whose wild bamboo vines left bleeding trails across her arms and legs. Her sun-bleached hair clung wet on her forehead.

She pushed aside the gray curtain of Spanish moss that canopied the live oak beneath which she and Mart had made their camp, waiting for November. The long gray fingers gave such privacy to the clearing that the camp would scarcely be noticed from the clay road a hundred feet away. Three walls of a pine shack were still standing under the oak. The flooring was intact. The shingle roof, drooping like an old hat where the fourth wall was gone, gave a certain shelter. It would do until trapping began. Then they could rent the old cabin in the hammock.

Ordinarily Florry pulsed with vague pleasure whenever she stepped within the cool shade of the oak, but the shade to-day, as for the past weeks, was a dusky delusion. It was more stifling than the open glare of the sun. After putting the bucket of water on the shady side of the camp and laying a palmetto leaf over it, she dropped down on the clean sand carpeted with oak leaves, panting like a dog. The blood beat scalding in her throat and cheeks. It had been hot and dry too long, longer than folks could bear.

The creak of a hand-pump sounded across the road like a sea-gull's cry. If the people in the new house were Crackers, she could get water from their well, but they were Yankees. They made no offer and she did not ask. She was not anxious to remind them of the camp's existence, for she was not sure whether or not they owned the land. Yankees were queer. They put up signs and warned people off.

She peered through the moss. The Yankee's small boy and girl were rolling discarded automobile tires for hoops down the roadway. They were tanned to the golden-brown of ripe pears. They moved with a dancer's grace, lifting their small arms free from the shoulders, like bird wings.

She watched them with a dull hunger. They were tiring in the intense heat. She saw that their faces were crimson. If they were hers, she'd make them lie down while it was so hot. The children trotted in like hot and weary puppies. The boy turned and latched the wooden gate after him.

Florry thought, "Ain't it fine to have a gate an' a house with doors."

The only good house she had ever lived in had been old Jo's cabin in the piney-woods. Her mother's grandfather had built it and her mother's father had put a new shingle roof on it. The front door was soft gray cypress. The kitchen door was pine and it had blown off the hinges the day she went away with Mart. She had been glad to go. She hadn't minded the make-shift camps and cabins since, nor the storms that moved them on to other places. Nobody had anything to say about such things. Mart hadn't been treated right. But you couldn't help other folks' meanness.

She had minded leaving old Sport behind, and the cat and the 'coon, and butchering the pig for rations. She minded the puny baby lying on a Yankee's land, under a Yankee woman's petunias. It came to her that if Mart had stayed on the clearing, in old Jo's cabin that she had a right to, she would still have the hound, and it might be the baby. They had let their fear move them on.

Maybe, she thought, the winter's trapping would be good and they could buy them some

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

land, free and clear; an acre or two from which they could not be driven by wind or circumstance. It would be fine to have Mart own a piece of ground, and a cabin with good doors to it. She lay motionless under the live oak, closing her eyes against the sand gnats. The summer had been so long. It had bothered Mart. She thought uneasily that he was late returning.

He was trading at Cap'n Tack's store in the village, four miles away. He had a string of perch and cat-fish he had caught in the lake. They came to sixty-six cents in trade. The storekeeper gave him a chunk of white bacon, five pounds of grits, a sack of meal and a can of Railroad snuff. Mart hesitated in the hot, dark store, odorous of rancid salt pork, of sour tobacco juice, of fish hummed above by swarms of flies. He wanted to ask some questions but the thick heat dulled his brain.

"This be September, eh?" he asked.

The storekeeper nodded.

"The tenth."

"How long 'twel the season gits opened?"

"End o' November."

Cap'n Tack had gone over to the law since the loss of his fishing equipment. He hoped to be appointed game warden this year.

"Plenty o' ducks flyin' over jest afore dark," he commented slyly. "Fixin' to do a leetle shootin'?"

"No," Mart said, "I done a piece o' trappin' a few miles fum here, afore I fished fer you. I got my trapses yistiddy fum the nigger I left 'em with. Jest fixin' to oil 'em an git 'em ready."

He wanted to reassure Cap'n Tack that he was a man with property and good for his bill.

"I sees. Col' drink afore you goes?"

A thought stirred in the storekeeper's shrewd brain. He lifted the lid of the ice-box. A wave of cold air washed over Mart's face. He was tempted.

"Shore would cool my gullet——"

He hated to get in debt another nickel. Cap'n Tack had already given him more than five dollars' credit. Storekeepers were smart that way. They worked your bill up, when a cold drink would feel so good. You thought, Only a nickel. There flashed across the weariness of his mind old Martha's chant—

"Fi' cents in my pocket, ten cents on my bill.
If I don't git no better, I'se boun' fo' Sugar Hill."

He smiled to himself.

"Reckon not to-day," he said.

The ice-box lid dropped down. He thought of asking for a chip of ice to suck, but he hated to. It was a nigger trick. If he was Cap'n Tack, a day like this, he'd lift that lid and just lie in that box, all through the heat of the day. He'd let the ice strike through him until his bones were cold.

When he set out down the road, the sun was at its zenith. It struck through the holes in his broad-brimmed straw hat. It made a golden inferno of the clay road under his calloused feet. It was an effort to keep a grip on the sack of rations and the strip of bear-grass on which he had kept three perch for Florry. His fingers prickled. The four miles were endless. Now and then he stopped by the side of the road to rest. He felt hotter than when he was in motion. Dry heat crawled over his body. He didn't believe he was sweating enough. It was always cooler when you could sweat.

He stepped off the road into the ditch to get out of the way of a truck he had seen gassing up in the village. The driver had been drinking cold pop at the gas station. Mart had noticed him fishing around for his favorite flavor in a great circular tank that held hundreds of pounds of ice and dozens of bottles. As the truck rattled past, the driver finished a final bottle and tossed it into the ditch. It lay at Mart's feet, still frosted, with a few mouthfuls of brown liquid bubbling in the bottom.

He picked it up, wiped the sand from the mouth and drained it thirstily. The last drops trickled down his parched throat in cold pinpoints of ecstasy. Ice made it feel that way. Warm pop was no better than sweetened water. He fondled the frigid glass of the bottle. He passed his dry lips over it. He laid it against his throat. Its coolness passed into him and the bottle became tepid. Only the concave bottom was cold and he slid it inside his shirt and back and forth across his belly. If he could choose between ice and 'shine, he would choose ice. Maybe not in the winter, but certainly now, in September, while it was so hot. He wished he had bought a cold dope of Cap'n Tack.

He remembered the look in the storekeeper's eyes. They had been talking about trapping. Suddenly the sweat started out of him. In a moment he was wet all over. The last thing in the world he should have mentioned was his traps. Cap'n Tack would take them away for his bill. He was always making off with some nigger's shotgun, or even his mule, and white men's too, when he could. He always took something that was worth several

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

times the bill, but when you owed him money, what could you do?

Mart thought maybe he and Florry had better get out right away. The traps were all he had. If he lost those, there was nothing left. Yet he knew no place to go, no good trapping place, where Cap'n Tack wouldn't hear about it and run him down. He'd heard the storekeeper was thick with the sheriff these days, doing low tricks together. No use having the law after him again. He was worn out now from those thirty days on the gang, road-building in the blistering summer sun. He'd been hot ever since, and tired.

As he turned off the road to the camp, he noticed his neighbor out working. He was painting his new house, slapping bright yellow paint on its fresh pine boarding. Sweat streamed down his face and arms. Now and then a drop spattered into his paint bucket. Mart laughed noiselessly.

"Paint! Yaller paint on fresh pine!"

Nothing was funnier than a Yankee coming down here with his money in the bank and trying to paint fresh pine. His fine paint would be flakes in the sand, this time next year. Nobody but a Yankee could help knowing that. Over his shoulder Mart saw the Yankee woman come out of the screen door with a pitcher of water. He could hear the ice in it clink against the glass. He had never wanted anything that didn't belong to him, but he couldn't help thinking how good it would be to have your old woman bring you ice water in the heat of the day; and when you were through your work, to sleep behind screens away from the sand flies and mosquitoes.

Florry sat up, hands on knees, as his familiar step crackled through the bone-dry underbrush. He placed the sack of groceries in a box nailed to a tree. Bull ants began at once to climb the trunk to wave their feelers about the sack of grits. He took off his hat, drew his faded blue sleeve across his damp face. He lifted the palmetto leaf over the drinking water, already lukewarm, dipped a rusty tin cup and drank again and again, his head thrown back. Drops of water fell crystal on the amber of his throat. He replaced the covering and laid the fish on it. He had cleaned them at the lake, because fish guts around the camp drew flies. He lay down with his head and shoulders against the trunk of the oak tree.

"Florry, I done played me the fool."

"How come?"

"I done let on to Cap'n Tack I had me my trapses here. He'll take 'em shore."

"Cain't you hide 'em gooder?"

"No use, now he know I got 'em."

"He mought not study none on takin' 'em. When kin us trap?"

"Us kin crowd the trappin' a mite. Iffen he don't bother me, 'bout a month fum now I'll set me a few trapses. Us kin hide the skins, like, 'twel I kin sell 'em."

"A month be four weeks, eh?" she mused.

She picked up Mart's pocket knife from the camp table and cut a straight length from the oak limb overhead. She began to cut notches, to make a calendar, so that if the moon wasn't clear, to show them, they could tell when a month had passed.

"Sunday, Monday, Chewsday, We'n'sday, Friday, Satiddy——"

That was one week. She began over again.

"Sunday——"

Mart closed his eyes.

"Hit's powerful hot," Florry said.

"Don't seem like I kin breathe. Don't seem like it's ever been so hot so long. Seems like it's plumb wore me out."

"Mebbe you got the fever," she suggested.

"Mought be. Don't seem like I kin stand it. Seems like the only thing'd cool me'd be lyin' deep down in water, some'eres, with chips o' ice floatin' around in it."

He drew his hat over his face for protection against any rays of the sun that might filter through the leaves as the afternoon wore on. Florry resumed her outstretched position near him. In the fevered coma of mid-afternoon there was no sound, neither of bird nor beast, neither of grass nor pine nor palmetto. The September heat smothered them all against her parched, unbreathing breast.

A car stopping in the road wakened them from their siesta. Two men were pushing their way in to the camp. Mart reared to his feet. Florry stepped behind the oak.

"Hit's them," he said.

Cap'n Tack lifted a hand in greeting.

"Howdy, Mart," he called jovially.

"Howdy."

The storekeeper leaned down casually to pick sandspurs from his pants.

"Mart, meet the sheriff."

The sheriff was a sallow fellow with thin yellow hands always open for chance fees. He did his profitable duty mournfully, as though the expense and trouble fell all upon his hunched shoulders.

"Howdy, Mart."

Mart's eyes moved up and down the man's frame, noting the uneasy gesture of the nervous fingers toward the ponderous revolver in the hip holster. He did not acknowledge

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the sheriff's greeting. He shifted his weight to lean one shoulder against the oak tree.

As though he were the host, Cap'n Tack waved toward the up-turned boxes about the camp.

"Set down, Sheriff."

The officer eased himself to a seat.

"Nice camp you got here."

"Couldn't git you one no sorrier," Mart said.

The sheriff looked about him. He caught sight of Florry's dark head leaning forward around the oak, her bright alarmed eyes on him.

"How do, Ma'am. How you?"

She bobbed her head to him.

Cap'n Tack drew out his plug of tobacco and pared off a shaving. He held it out to the sheriff questioningly.

"Reckon I'll smoke a cigarette."

The officer passed his package. Mart hesitated and took one, lighting it quickly with his own match. Cap'n Tack worked up his chew. The cigarette smoke hung blue and heavy on the thick air. A buzzard wheeled in the hot sky. A hawk screamed from a nearby pine. Mart smoked thoughtfully, as though he were alone. The sheriff cleared his throat.

"Mart," he said, "I'm sorry to crowd you, but I reckon you'd best hand over your traps for your debt to Tack here. He says he's got no other way to collect."

"Thet ain't so. Soon's I kin git to trappin' I kin git ketched up." Mart spoke slowly, watching the end of his cigarette.

"I got no way o' knowin'," interrupted the storekeeper, "he ain't goin' to jest pick up an' go off, traps an' all."

"I ain't fixin' to go off."

"That's what he says." The storekeeper nodded suggestively to the officer, who nodded back.

Mart said flatly, "The trapses is wuth a sight more'n the bill."

"They don't bring nothin' when you sells 'em, Sheriff," Cap'n Tack insisted.

"That's right," the sheriff agreed gravely. He shook out a handkerchief and wiped his face.

"Tell you what I'll do for him," the storekeeper spoke amiably, slapping his knee. "I'll let him take back the loan of his traps come winter and trap for me on shares."

Mart stamped out his cigarette butt angrily.

"You jest a-figgered it out thet-a-way," he raged. "Dogged iffen I'll do it."

"Reckon you will."

The two men glanced at each other and moved in together toward him.

"You two pilferin' pole-cats—" He spat contemptuously.

"Look out how you talk to the law," the sheriff warned him sadly.

Mart kicked at a pile of leaves at the base of the oak.

"Take 'em," he said, "an' git."

He turned his back and walked away.

Cap'n Tack raked out the dozen traps. The sheriff kept an uneasy watch on the contemptuous ragged back.

"I hates to crowd you," the storekeeper remarked cheerfully.

The two men made off smartly, increasing their pace as they approached the road. Mart wheeled.

"Look at 'em scat," he said bitterly.

He reached suddenly for his shotgun leaning against the far side of the tree. He lifted it, trembling. Then he laid it carefully down.

"Hit ain't wuth it," he said.

The sun set molten, beneficence gone mad. The evening was a soft gray velvet suffocation. Sand gnats and mosquitoes hummed and stung. Mart opened his shirt and fanned himself with its tails. Florry was wet with the labor of waving a palmetto leaf for fan. The fish for supper had made them thirsty. Their lips were cracking. Mart set the bucket of water between them. It was the temperature of the air, nauseating on the palate. Its leaf-flavored brackishness tasted slightly rotten. It was good neither to quench thirst nor to cool the throat. Only ice could make it fit to drink. Florry drank, but Mart pushed the bucket aside.

He sat down with his back to the tree and leaned his head despairingly against the gray trunk. He closed and unclosed his broad fists, then his hands relaxed and lay loosely on the ground. Florry moved to the camp table and cleared off the debris of supper.

"Save them cold grits, Florry. Thet sack o' rations is like to be the last you'll git."

She stared at him. In the faint light the sweat glistened on his face. She could see his pulse work desperately in and out from his knotted throat. She crouched beside him and peered at him.

"Mart! You be'n't afeered?"

"I ain't skeert o' nobody," he answered heavily.

"No, I knows thet." She pushed the soft hair impatiently behind her ears. She fixed the bright squirrel eyes earnestly on him. "I

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

means, you ain't afeered o' not gittin' no rations? Not gittin' no place fer us to be? You ain't afeered o' what-all kin happen to folkses?"

He did not answer. He closed his eyes and rubbed the back of his dark head against the roughness of oak-bark.

Florry thought, "Mart's in trouble, shore."

"I knows how you feels," she said comfortingly.

She moved away to build the night's mosquito smudge and sat down in the slow gray drift of smoke. She frowned anxiously, seizing at thoughts that swept by like the wild flight of doves. She had felt secure so long. Now security was slipping away. Mart's despair was quicksand under her feet. In the old days of the cypress swamp her courage had stood like a wind-break against old Jo and the chill brown waters. Since the day she had gone away with Mart, through wind and rain, she had not needed courage.

"—*burden down*——"

She had laid her burden down on his lean, strong knees. She thought, "I've done had me a rest, like." A burden laid down could be picked up again.

"Mart," she said. "likely you're worrit up abouten me. You belong to know I ain't skeert, not one leetle mite."

"You leetle ole froggy thing, you," he said gently, "rabbity, like your daddy said——"

His voice turned harsh.

"You belong to be skeert."

He spat in the smoky fire and swung forward so that he sat on his heels, rocking.

"Hit ain't like I was a sorry thing wouldn't do a man's work nor a day's work, neither," he said passionately. "You knows I've scratched like a hound dog at a gopher hole. Nor I ain't been pertickler what 'twas I done, fishin' or trappin' or 'shinin' or sich. Exscusin' workin' fer a Yankee," he corrected himself.

"I cain't work fer folkses thet-a-way, nohow," he said unhappily. "Does they git biggety, I gits uppity, an' it's trouble shore. An' evvything I done, Florry, has got so messed up there wa'n't no straightenin' to it. Storms an' sich, a-spoilin' the fishin', an' other fellers' meanness a-spoilin' t'other things. Hain't done nary good to kep' a-workin', no more good then squattin' by a creek with a cat-fish line."

He wiped his wet face with his shirt sleeve.

"You belong to be skeert, a'right. There ain't nothin' left to try. There ain't no'eres left to go. Us been a-climbin' ol' Jacob's ladder thouten no end to it."

"Them trapses—" she interrupted.

"Them trapses finished us off, shore," he said. "Did I try to trap on shares fer thet storekeepin' buzzard, I'd owe him twicet the hides, come the yare's end. Him takin' the trapses finished us. An' the heat, Florry." His eyes rested on her appealingly, like those of a dog. "Seems like the heat's plumb wore me out."

His head drooped forward between his knees. Florry brushed away the mosquitoes on his hair. She threw a handful of oak leaves on the smudge.

"He's like to had the chidlin's beat out of him," she thought.

"I don't belong to be skeert," she said doggedly. "You done tole me your very self, hit don't make no difference where we goes nor what we does, nor where we squats to eat our rations."

"Iffen we got any——"

"An' thet don't make no differance, neither," she persisted. "Goin' hungry don't matter. Nor a roof to git under don't matter. Nor folks drawin' in their necks an' strikin' like a rattlesnake. Them's all things you cain't he'p."

She wrinkled her forehead and rubbed her thin hands tensely up and down her thighs.

"But you kin he'p bein' afeered!" she said fiercely.

She reached in his pocket for his snuff box and lipped a pinch quickly.

"Folks is wusser'n storms," she pondered. "Git you a place you got a right to, a place you kin drive folks offen, steaden their chunkin' things at you—you ain't so likely to hev trouble."

Mart lifted his head impatiently.

"Florry, you're talkin' wild as a coot."

"Mart," she said, "you knows good I got me a right to Pappy's cabin, yonder in the piney-woods. Would you jest stand up to him one time an' maybe framm him with them big hands o' yourn, us'd be safe-like right on. I got me my rights there."

"An' I done had me my rights, too," he said bitterly, "evvy time I been moved on." He stretched flat, an arm across his face. "Wisht thet bucket o' water was cold an' fitten."

"Our well water had sulphur to it, but it shore were cold an' fine."

"Hit ain't a mite o' use, Florry. I ain't got the strength to leg it thet fur, jest to git th'owed out agin. Hit's goin' to a goat's house fer wool."

"Be you skeert?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I ain't skeert o' yer daddy." He was sullen.

She took a deep, slow breath.

"Well, I'm a-headin' fer the cabin, come day. Reckon you'd bes' foller jes' to take keer o' me."

"Florry, leave me be. I cain't hold out. I'm wore out. Damn thet fire! Put it out! I kin stand the skeeters better'n a smudge to-night."

"You got you a tech o' fever. Hit'll do you good to git outen the hammocks. Hit's the last chanct, shore, Mart, headin' fer the piney-woods. Us got to try it. If us cain't stay there —" she did not finish.

"Mart——"

Her small voice was gentle.

"Mart, be you skeert o' what-all kin happen to folkses?"

He did not answer for so long that she thought he had gone to sleep in his weariness. She leaned over him to hear what he was saying.

"I got a right to be——"

VIII

Florry thought that she had moved through such a nightmare before. The trek to Dixie County was like the hot seas of fever in which she had once swum. The air, like that of delirium, was palpable, pressing on her bony shoulders an insupportable weight. Her straight muscular calves ached as though the flat roads wound forever up-hill. Old Jo's blows had never fallen on her head so heavily as the direct rays of the September sun. No cypress log had tugged so ponderously against her as the burden of Mart's heavy spirit. He followed her like a hound unwillingly at heel.

The thought of the clearing drew her ahead, as resistless as the sun. If she could reach it before the storms caught them up, she would willingly lie down on the cabin floor and let old Jo flail about him. She was weak with longing for the piney-woods, where the sun dropped visibly behind the tall trees, and peace lay like a cloak of pine-needles, pierced only by the rhythmic pattern of the hoot-owl's cry.

She felt hurried. The thick heat was a warning of change to come. It had been hot too long. There had been no rain since the torrents of June, and these had long since sunk deep into the soil. The sand was like powder. The clay ridges were burned brick. The flat-woods were brown. The occasional hammocks were dried up except in the lowest swamps and along the edges of lakes and streams. The creeks were withered down to the brown beds, cracking wide with thirst. The frogs, who had sung all spring in the good damp, were silent under the ooze where they had burrowed. Across the roads the moccasins and king snakes moved all day in search of water. Now the winds had stopped, and there was no breath of coolness anywhere. September was so still, so hot, that the very elements could not endure it. In a little while they would explode. They would burst out with wind and rain, tearing the heat to tatters.

In Levy County they passed a gang cutting ties in the flatwoods.

Mart said, "Mus' us stop, an' me git a job, two-three days?"

Florry shook her head.

"Us got to keep goin'. Hit's time fer the high winds. Us'll git ketched shore, do us stop."

They travelled fast on light rations. They were worn down to assemblages of bones that kept moving forward. Florry's feet were blistered under the worn soles of her shoes. Whenever they left the highways and cut through on the dirt roads, she walked barefooted, treading surely with long, spread toes. The high cheek-bones lay across her thin pointed face like sun-baked ridges. Her eyes were sink-holes filled with leaf-brown water. In rough going, her long arm, lean as a crane's wing, held aside thorny vines to spare Mart, shuffling dull-eyed and indifferent behind her.

At night they tried to camp near water, to cool their feet and wash the sweat from their bodies. Florry was clean. They had now no change of clothing, and she washed their shirts by starlight or by moonlight, in running water. She cooked hoe-cake in a palm-leaf in hot ashes and roasted what fish they stopped to catch. They sat each night by their camp-fire, staring wearily at the embers. Mart crouched dazed, until his eyes closed and his shoulders fell back on the moss-pile Florry gathered.

"You got the fever," she repeated again and again.

"Don't seem like I kin stand it," he would answer.

Yet she knew that it was more than fever ailed him. Random fears scampered like young rabbits before her. Old Jo might meet them, first thing, with a load of buckshot. He might have let the house burn down, lying drunk before the fireplace. Violence was reasonable, concerning him. She had promised Mart security. If it was not there to give——

She watched the white, hot skies anxiously. She was sure of her directions, but they had been more than a week on the way without a landmark. A Georgia sweet potato peddler offered them a lift in his truck. Timidly, they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

accepted. Mart sat talking with the driver, but Florry slept most of the day, joggling snugly on potato sacks fragrant with the smell of Georgia earth. When she roused toward sunset, she recognized a bridge over which she and Mart had passed in their first flight south. They had come far in the one day's travel. The peddler gave them a few pounds of potatoes. Mart shot a young 'possum as they camped at dusk. That night they feasted. The thick air smothered them, but in the heaviness a restlessness stirred at last, like a quiver of wind across still water.

The next day Mart began to recognize the territory he had once so briefly visited. They were in the open piney-woods, walking over brown pine-needles inches deep. Sparkleberry leaves caught spots of sunlight that filtered through the shadows. Gallberries shone black like small eyes. Quail ran ahead of them down the ruts of the wagon trail. Doves whirred from the tops of the pines in rose-gray flocks. Squirrels chattered shrilly from a safe distance.

Mart's eyes grew wide. He shifted his shotgun from the crook of his elbow to his shoulders, fingering the trigger.

"I mean, this is shore good huntin' woods."

Florry nodded.

"The squirrels is extry thick count o' this bein' seed yare."

That night they talked late by the campfire. The abundant game stirred Mart to interest. She told him what she knew of trapping here; of logging; of cane-growing. Long after she had gone to sleep he sat hunched by the live oak coals. At midnight a shiver passed across the lethargy of the pines. A sudden chill moved through.

When Florry wakened in the first silver daylight, she said, "Us cain't no more'n make it."

The woods creatures were stirring excitedly, the squirrels scampering up and down the trees with a tail-whisking madness.

"They allus acts thet-a-way afore a storm," she told him.

There was a breathless hush in the forest, but overhead gray clouds scudded wildly to the southwest. There was terror in the flight of these imponderable things, as though the forces pounding in behind them were those of a pestilence. The sky blackened moment by moment. Twilight took over the woods; then dark. There was no morning; no day; no longer any time. The mottled bark of the pines spotted the blackness. Mart's face and Florry's floated white, detached from their bodies that were blended with the myrtle bushes and the dark trunks of trees. They were phantoms, hurrying unhappily through the endless piney-woods of space.

Florry said, "Us got a mile to go."

She stared over her shoulder. As she looked, the black sky turned luminous. A green translucence filled the east. A gust of cold wind puffed in from nowhere and was gone. A few drops of rain flicked their throats. Florry pulled her gray cotton blouse together across her slim brown neck. Suddenly the air about them vibrated. There was no perceptible wind, but the pines quivered. Their needles rustled frantically a moment. Something like a shudder stirred in the palmettos. Florry laid a quick hand on Mart's bare forearm.

"Listen!"

Far off a giant sea of wind was pounding on the shingle that was the forest. A roar as of surf beat in, wave on wave, seething and angry. It was coming nearer. A rumble—a boom—as the gale moved close it climbed the scale until its voice was a high-pitched whine. It hung there shrieking, shrill beyond all mortal bagpipes. The sky was black and green glass. The storm was shattering it into uncountable brittle pieces. The sky crashed. Floods of rain fell slantwise. Chaos came in and ripped the piney-woods to pieces. This was the hurricane.

Mart tried to shelter Florry with his body. He pushed his side against the gale, pulling her along in the lee of him. The first rush of the storm deluged them. It drove blinding into their eyes and cascaded down their thin frames. The wind choked off their breath. Sometimes it was a great wall against which there was no moving. They stood balancing, heads lowered, until a hole broke in the wall to let them through. Their clothes were pasted flat against them, so that they were like wet dark statues. With her eyes wide, her soft hair plastered over her ears, her small pointed breasts and slender thighs, Florry had to Mart the look of a child.

He shouted, "Leave me tote you."

She shook her head.

"I kin make out."

Her voice, close against his ear, was a thin sweet flute above the scream of the hurricane.

Her knowledge of the ways of trees kept them safe. When an old pine, rotten of heart, crashed down, her quick eye caught in time the ominous sway. Against falling limbs, palmetto fans driven like spears before the gale, they could only keep their arms over their heads and take the stinging blows as they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

came. Their sleeves were torn in shreds. The rain washed the blood from their cuts as it ran. They fought ahead, tripping over logs and into holes made invisible by rushing water.

At noon they reached the cabin. Florry stamped the sand from her bare feet and wrung the water from her full skirt. She lifted the latch of the gray cypress door. Together they threw their shoulders against it. It swung violently open and thumped flat against the wall. Florry sprawled headlong into the room. Mart turned his back to tug the door shut again.

He heard old Jo's amazed curse and Florry's cry. He bolted the door and wheeled to see the old man lift a heavy light-wood knot from the clay hearth above the girl's thin shoulders. Fierce, not with anger but with a strange delight, he knocked the stick from old Jo's claw and closed his hands about the leathery neck. He tightened his grip until the blood-shot eyes grew wild and the strong old hands quit their beating upon him. A terrified whimper came from the scrawny throat. Old Jo's body drooped limply. Mart held him up by the jaws. The neck under his fingers seemed suddenly weak and small. He pushed the man from him, tumbling him across the sagging pine bedstead. Old Jo sobbed and gasped. Mart loomed over him.

"Ole feller," he said, "mebbe you'll be a mite more pertickler about yer meanness. Reckon you an' me's goin' to make out over the same pot o' grits."

Old Jo snuffled and wiped his nose.

Florry's blood stirred warm again, where for a moment there had been the old chill of fear. Jo was old; frightened, old and beaten. She stared at the unhappy huddle on the bed. He was mumbling miserably, his old face wrinkled in distress. The ancient terror was gone.

Mart strode about, appraising the bare room with satisfaction. His step, that had shuffled all summer, in spite of his weariness was hard and sure. Something of the shy delight was in him that he had brought to her in this place those several years ago. His wet clothes steamed as he moved closer to the hearth fire. The gale drummed fiercely on the shingled roof. The small-paned windows rattled like loose teeth.

"Ole feller," he called to the sniffling heap on the bed, "is they rations in yer kitchen?"

"There be meal an' sich," the old man profferred grudgingly.

"Le's go, Florry."

They dashed through the east door, across the breezeway, Mart pushing Florry ahead of him against the pounding winds. They burst into the kitchen, only to have the full force of the hurricane sweep in upon them through the gaping doorway.

"Thet ole rascal," Mart yelled, "never put back thet door blowed off."

She put out a hand to hold him, but he was already in the storm, freeing the fallen door from a tangle of weeds. He loped across the sand, searching out an implement for his uses. He picked up at last a rusty axe-head, and brought in a pine sapling to use for batten. The wind shrieked over the kitchen, but it was no longer blowing through. Mart had the door in place.

Florry called through the thin pine.

"Kin you make thet sorry door stay shet?"

He thumped confidently with the rusty axe-head.

"Hit'll hold," he said.

"Behind the Swamp There Was a Village," by Nahum Sabsay, one of the freshest and most original pieces of writing that has come to our notice in years, will be the Prize Contest Selection in the May SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE. *Mr. Sabsay is a native of Russia, served in the Russian and Belgian armies during the war, and came to this country at the age of 28. He graduated from Harvard in 1923 with the degree of B.S. in mining. His writing has a clarity and warmth which is due in part to his respect for the language which he had to learn by much effort. His story has an idyllic quality which remains in the memory long after the story is finished.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED